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October 1999

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NATALIE IMBRUGLIA p33
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MUSIC SPECIAL

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stepbystep 20 pages of sensible Internet advice

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Flick before you click

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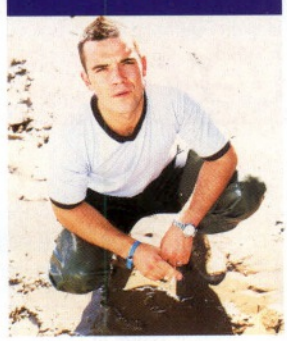
NET SOUNDS
Get the news, see the gigs, meet the stars
stepbystep 20 pages of sensible Internet advice
'The Net has removed the distance between us and our favourite artists'

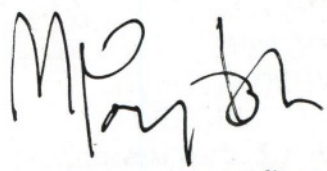


Picture the scene: it's just gone 11 on a Thursday night. I've put the cat out, popped on my slippers and settled down in an easy chair with a mug of Horlicks when there's a knock on the door.

Imagine my surprise to find Aussie songstress Natalie Imbruglia standing there, guitar in hand, ready to serenade me with an impromptu rendition of *Torn*, backed by a supergroup comprising members of Oasis, The Who and The Jam.

Sadly, I woke up at that point – but the possibility of a pint-sized pop star dropping in for a cuppa and a chinwag is no longer a dream shared only by lustful teenagers and demented stalkers. The Internet has completely removed the distance between us, the adoring (and mostly sane) public, and our favourite artists. No longer will a hurried glimpse of our idol suffice: now we can chat with them online, watch them in concert without standing knee-deep in mud, or pass on comments on their latest CD in the knowledge they really will be read.

With this in mind, we've put together a bumper guide to the best music sites on the Web, the stars you'll find online and NetAid, the record-breaking gig that will revolutionise the way we watch bands. The Internet – it's the new rock 'n' roll.



Mark Payton, **Group Editor**
mark.payton@haynet.com

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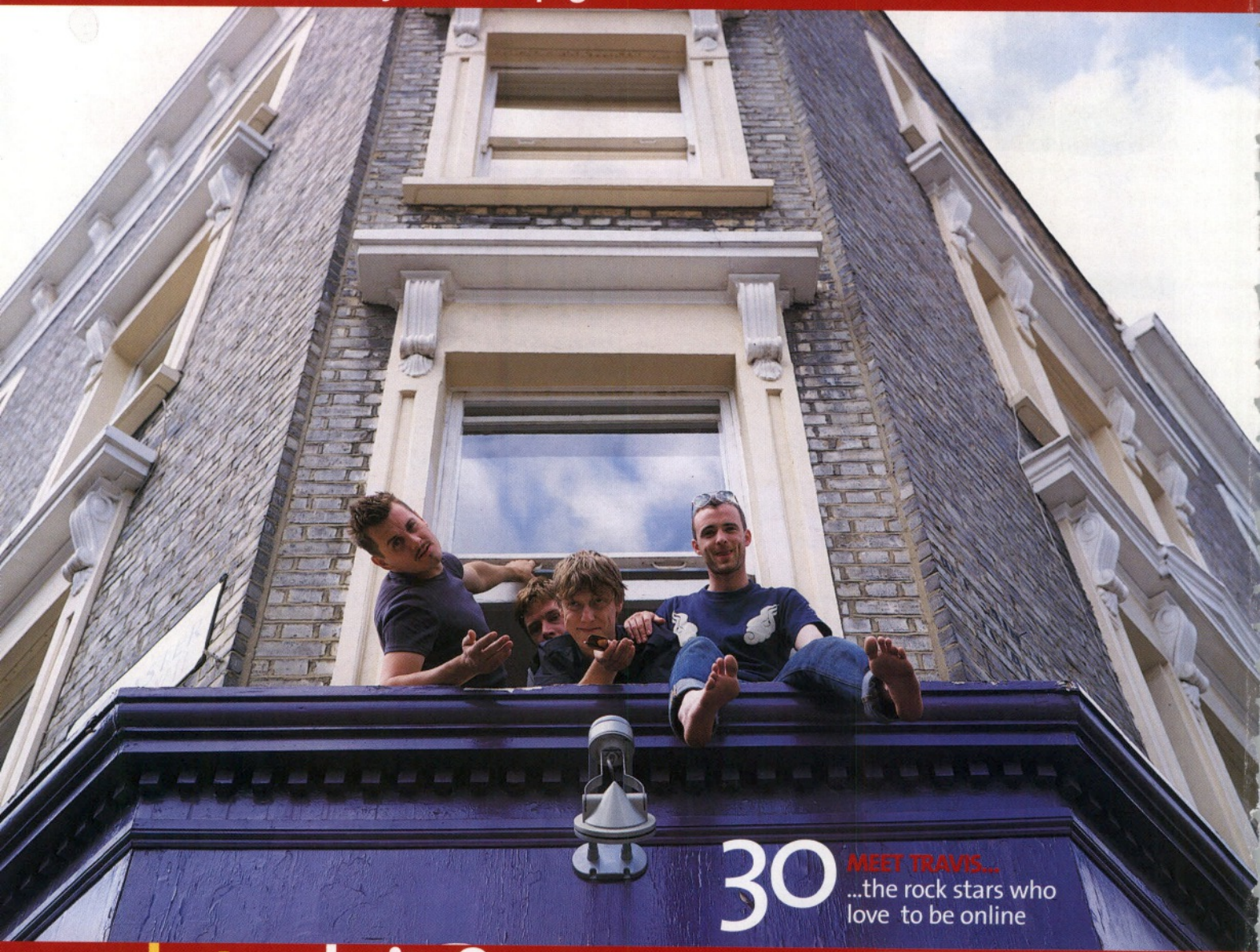
Don't leave your home page without us



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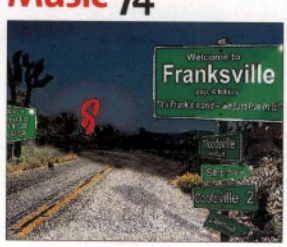

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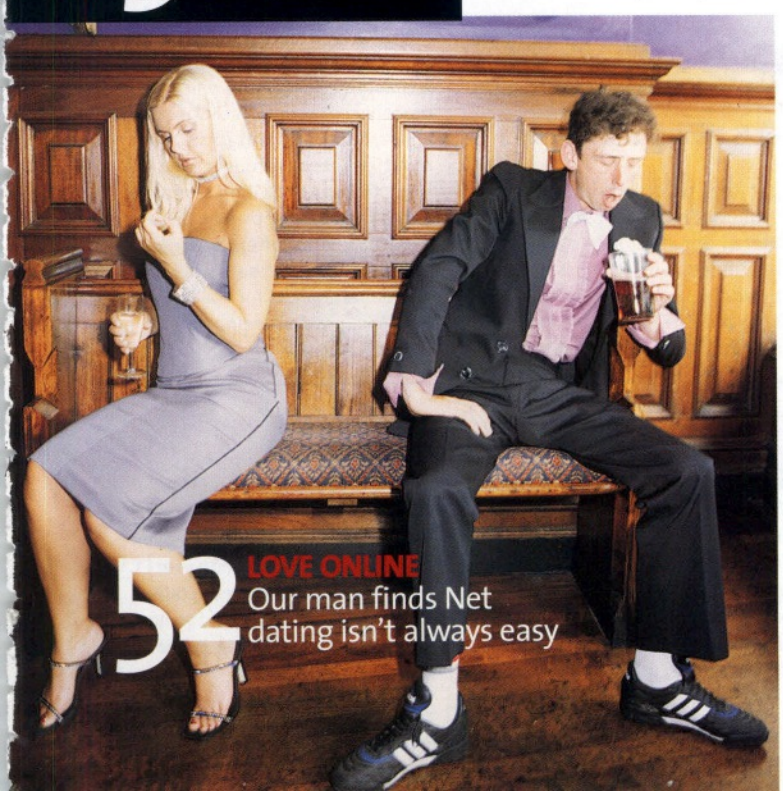

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Reeves and Bullock: mesmerised by ADSL

ADSL users will sign up via an ISP and pay a monthly fee of £40 upwards

CONNECTION

Coming up to speed

Tired of spending hours trying to load pages? The answer is round the corner...

British Telecom has announced plans for a new high-speed data service that will deliver content from the Net at speeds between 10 and 40 times faster than a conventional modem.

ADSL (Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line) will offer an 'always on' high-speed connection to the Internet, meaning users will be able to make full use of applications such as teleworking, videoconferencing, online gaming and downloading multimedia content. ADSL is merely an upgrade to existing telephone lines, which is achieved by adding advanced electronics to both ends of the line, so there's no need for BT to start digging the roads up. Internet users wanting to take advantage of ADSL will sign up through a conventional ISP and pay a monthly subscription that could be anything upwards of £40 per months. Speeds offered range from 512kbps to 2Mbps, compared to the measly 56kbps now on offer.

Because ADSL offers a permanent connection, there will be no additional charges for dialling, so it's a cheap way of being online.

www.bt.com/adsl/

Annoy fellow motorists, thanks to the Web

HARDWARE

MP3 ON THE MOVE

The MP3 revolution is in full swing, as both established and unsigned bands bombard the Internet with MP3 content for download. But wouldn't it be great if you could download music in the format and play it on your car stereo? Of course, somebody has already thought about it and you can now get your hands on the Empeg MP3 Car Audio Player. The standalone unit is designed as a car stereo, but can actually be used anywhere as a standalone unit. To store music on the Empeg, you simply download it on to your PC and the transfer onto the stereo using the cables provided. The lowest end model will hold 70 hours of music and the high end a staggering 476 hours.

www.empeg.com

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT...?
No.3: Java

It's obviously nothing to do with the coffee or the country, is it?
Funnily enough, there is a link. It's rumoured that Java was named after Java coffee, which its creators consumed in huge quantities.

What's all the fuss about then?
Java is a programming language designed specifically to run on any kind of computer or gadget, whether it is a PC, Mac or mobile phone. It's also designed to be completely secure so it won't do nasty things to your computer. It has also been used to create secure Web-based email.

What use is it to me?
Well you probably use it without even knowing. Major Web browsers are Java-compatible, and Java is used for scrolling news tickers, chat rooms and animations amongst other things.

How does it work?
That all depends on exactly what you are using it for, but from a Web browser, part of the page contains instructions for your browser to run a separate program on your computer. These programs are called applets.

Sounds pretty dull to me.
To be fair, Java was supposed to revolutionise the way we do our computing, but to the average man on the street it hasn't made much difference. The most we get out of it is animations, clocks and tiny programs that will let you play classic arcade games like asteroids.

So it's another false dawn then?
Not necessarily. Java still has a lot of potential and you'll probably end up using it without realising it in Web pages and even home appliances, which could have Java programs that will be run from your computer. So before you know it you could be turning on your washing machine from the office.

So what else do I need to know?
Nothing really, let the computer boffins keep on coming up with stuff and you can keep using it, probably without knowing it. For more info, check out ***www.javasoft.com***

C3Po: speaks in tongues, just like Java

NOT TONIGHT, I'M DOWNLOADING

A rather worrying one in six young Internet users would rather stay in their rooms and hit the Net or play computer games than spend time with their boyfriend and girlfriend. The figure is a result of research by lifestyle ISP Madasafish, which also confirmed the trend that Net users are more interested in downloading music than looking for porn, with MP3 surpassing sex as the number one search term.

Another survey carried out by the ISP revealed that 80 per cent of music industry representatives believe the future of music sales and promotion is over the Internet. If you don't believe them, read our music special on page 28.
www.madasafish.com

Sorry Jose, but there's a QT trailer on the Net

WHAT'S HOT AND WHAT'S NOT ON THE NET

IN & OUT

POMP AND CIRCUMSTANCE
www.elgar.org
EUROPEAN UNION(ONLY FOR THE RYDER CUP)
www.europarl.eu.int
THE ITALIAN JOB
www.geocities.com/MotorCity/2706/italjob.htm
JENNIFER LOPEZ
www.jenniferlopez.com
UMBRELLAS
www.umbrellatime.com

LAWRENCE DALLAGLIO'S REPUTATION
www.rfu.com
UNIVERSAL SOLDIERS
www.unisolthereturn.com
BRADFORD'S PREMIERSHIP HOPES
www.legend.co.uk/citygent/
MALE SARONGS
www.topman.co.uk
RADIO 1 ROADSHOWS
www.bbc.co.uk/radio1

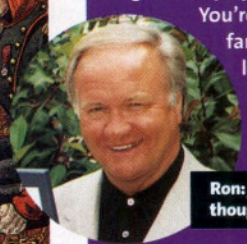
News Bytes
BITS IN BRIEF

MAKE A NOTE OF IT
Would-be Eric Claptons can learn to play their favourite songs at the Songplayer Web site. The Songplayer software synchronises with your CD version of a song, showing you exactly how to play the chords. Tracks cost between £1.95 and £3.95.
www.songplayer.com

Clapton in unfortunate hot-tin-roof incident

NO MORE NET?
The Internet should be scrapped, according to a Net user in Norway. His posting to the little used newsgroup *alt.destroy.the.internet* declared that man is not designed to sit in front of a screen all day, so the Net and TV should be scrapped and people should walk in the mountains instead. So what exactly was he doing when he made the posting?

RON AGAIN
Big Ron Atkinson has signed a new deal – with online giants AOL. The flamboyant Coventry and Aston Villa manager is to be AOL's new Director of Football, offering advice, comment and insider gossip on the game to players of the You're The Boss fantasy football league game.
www.aol.co.uk


Ron: just when you thought it was safe

WORD UP
Net users are being asked to contribute to an updated version of the *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)*. The dictionary is undergoing the first ever complete revision in its history, which is due to be published in 2010. The full contents will be available online in March 2000, but in the meantime the OED see their site as the perfect medium for continuously revising the dictionary. Many of the words up for consideration – such as 'spam,' 'hacker' and 'surfer' – have their origins on the Internet.
www.oed.com

PICTURES: KOBAL, RETNA, REX

TECHNOLOGY

They really want to see those fingers

Like it or not, passwords are now an accepted part of our daily life. You need passwords to log on to your computer, to check your email, to use a cashpoint – the list is endless, but Key Tronic is making life easier by using fingerprint technology in order to make passwords redundant.

One example is the Finger Scanner Keyboard, which scans your fingerprint and uses it as a log on 'password'. Although this is more likely to be useful for those on networks, where administrators can easily decide access privileges for certain users, the keyboard can nonetheless be used at home to make sure no-one else gets on your machine unless you want them to. The keyboard will set you back £149 excluding VAT. ***www.keytronic-europe.com***

Finger Scanner: the first sexy keyboard?

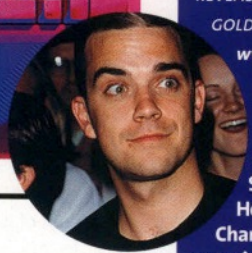
SPOKEN WORD

LOOK WHO'S TALKING...

Top quotes from celebrity Net chats

'I suppose most of us have a darker side, and I thought the Emperor was pretty neat – but I'm seeing a therapist about that.'

C3PO ACTOR ANTHONY DANIELS REVEALS THAT ALL THAT TIME IN A GOLD SUIT HAS GOT TO HIM AT ***www.beeb.com***



'We're still influenced by the same people. Good soul, good rock. Small Faces, Sex Pistols, Hendrix, Nick Drake – Charlie Drake. And fantastic arses in denim shorts.'

DODGY LIVE UP TO THEIR NAME YET AGAIN ON AOL

'I never trust people who say they have no regrets.'

DOUGLAS ADAMS PROVES THAT HE MUST HAVE HIS SUSPICIONS ABOUT YOUNG ROBBIE WILLIAMS AT ***www.beeb.com***

'I keep an open mind about the whole bending business, [laughing] so to speak.'

PAUL MCKENNA HAS NO REAL OPINION ON URI GELLER'S ANTICS, AT ***www.virgin.net.*** *WHATEVER CAN HE MEAN?*

SHOPPING

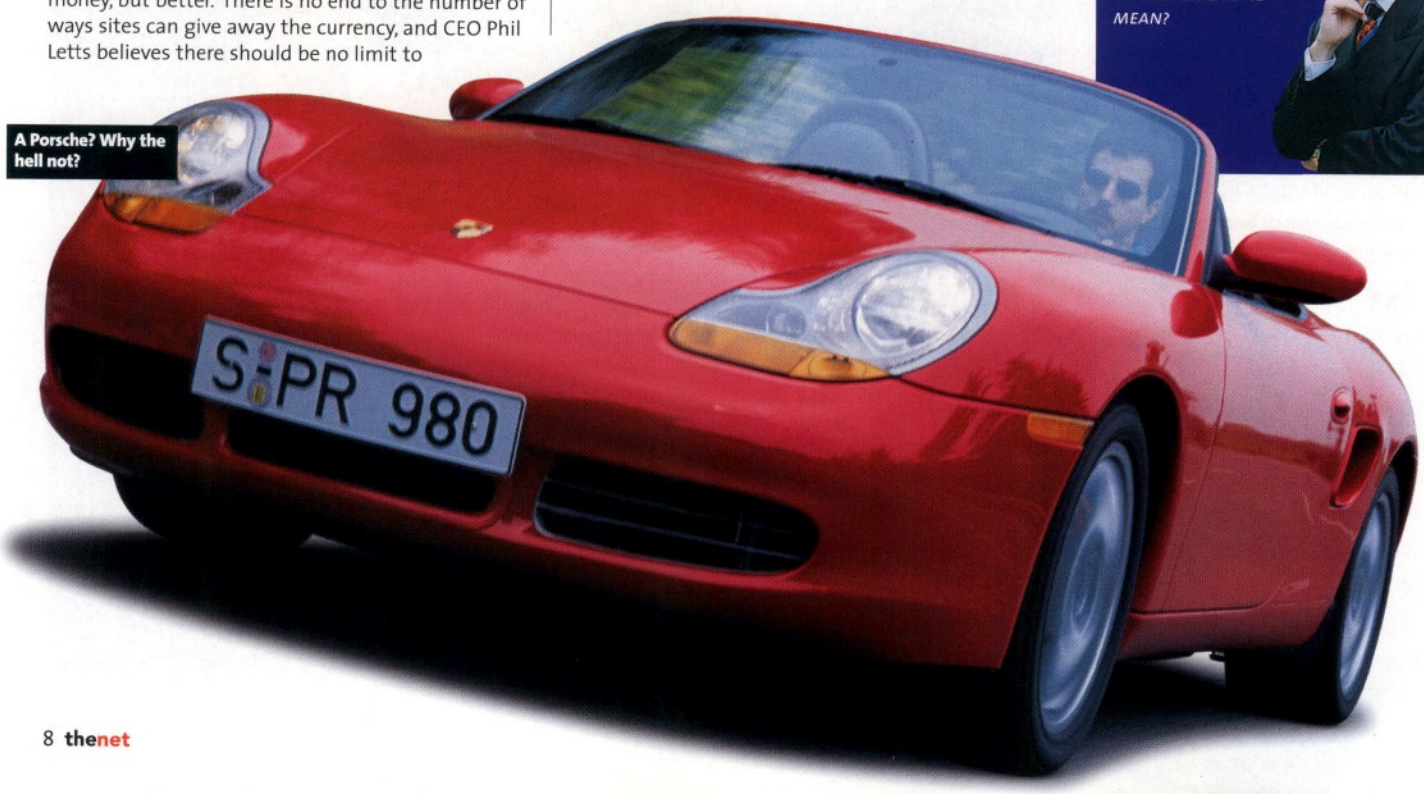
Currency convertors

Why beenz means good news for online shopaholics everywhere

Revolutionary Web currency beenz can now be used to purchase items on over 200 Web sites. Beenz is a virtual currency, with no direct relation to 'real' money. Hundreds of sites give them away, some as a reward simply for visiting that particular site, others require you to be more interactive, such as filling in a registration form or going to a certain section of a site. Although there is no need to spend money to earn your beenz, you can spend them on products from online shops. A million beenz transactions have now been completed.

The people behind the concept believe it is 'like money, but better.' There is no end to the number of ways sites can give away the currency, and CEO Phil Letts believes there should be no limit to how many things you should be able to buy. One site has signed up offering holidays in the Caribbean for anyone with enough beenz, and Phil declares 'Someone should be able to buy a Porsche with beenz – why the hell not?'

Sites wishing to use beenz, whether giving them away or taking them as currency, need only add one line of HTML to their page and the rest is run from a separate server. Setting up an account is simple – just visit the site, fill in your email address and nominate a password. Anytime you collect or use beenz just fill in your details. ***www.beenz.com***



A Porsche? Why the hell not?

Celebrity bookmarks

No3 Tom Cruise & Nicole Kidman

Eyes Wide Shut

www.eyeswideshut.com

One of Hollywood's favourite couples has come along way since *Days of Thunder* and Tom now boasts character names somewhat more realistic than Cole Trickle. Stanley Kubrick's final masterpiece is a tale of 'jealousy and sexual obsession.' Maybe they haven't come that far.

Intimate Relationships

www.intimate relationships.com

Several rumours came from the set of *Eyes Wide Shut* suggesting that, lovely couple though they are, Tom and Nicole didn't have that necessary spark to nail the sex scenes. A few visits to a therapist should sort it out.

Winkworth

www.winkworth.co.uk

Our delightful couple seem to have a prediliction for buying houses in London so they may want to keep an eye on this online Estate agents, which offers virtual tours of houses up for sale.

Gail Porter Heaven

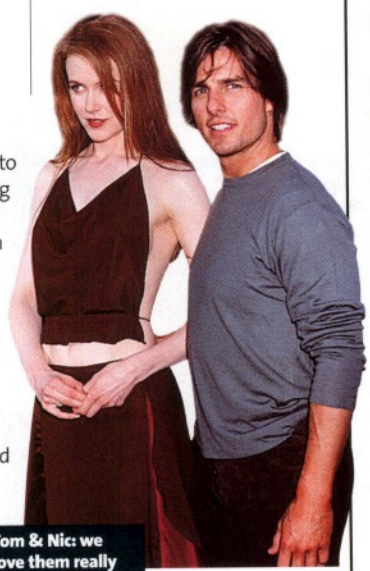
www.gail-porter.freeserve.co.uk

The wee Scottish lassie has declared that her bare naked lady days are behind her, probably because every magazine had already shot her nude. Seeing as Miss Kidman seems to get her kit off in every film she does, and even in theatre productions, perhaps she might take a leaf out of Gail's book.

Unofficial Mission: Impossible 2

home.swipnet.se/~w-49193/mi2/

Your mission Tom, should you choose to accept it, is to try to make a film that is vaguely believable and doesn't involve helicopters flying down the channel tunnel. Mind you if you couldn't make having it away with your own wife look realistic there's not much hope for you.



Tom & Nic: we love them really

MUSIC ONLINE CD STORES In last month's Net Challenge feature on online CD stores, we claimed that two sites – 101CD and CDShop – did not deliver the CD of our choice within two weeks. Both sites have asked us to point out that the ordering process was not properly completed and if we had placed an order it would have arrived in two days. We apologise to both shops and are happy to clarify this matter.

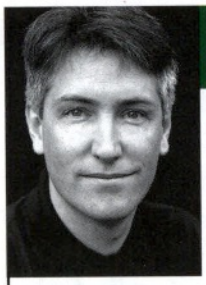
Ain't love grand?

Meeting the woman of your dreams is a wonderful experience, but it doesn't really help if you're stuck in Milton Keynes and your paramour is in the States. Not that it's stopped the relationship between Hostess Cupcake and Dante (aka Martin Howlings and Eileen Conrad) who have been together for three and a half years. To celebrate the fact they have launched a site called A Happy Place(!) to share their experiences with the world.

www.ahappyplace.com

Sweet, isn't it? Nope...

Find out how the net's own online romeo fared in our dating feature on page 52.



JON CASIMIR

WORLD SURFING CHAMPION

The very model of a modern woman?

The Japanese got there first, of course. In 1996, the HoriPro company launched the career of Kyoko Date, virtual idol. Kyoko (project name DK96, the initials standing for 'digital kids') was pimped by her creators as the first synthetic superstar, an instant, computer-generated celebrity in the Japanese aidoru keshu (idol-singer) tradition.

She was available for interviews and magazine pictures. She hosted a night-time radio program. She collected sneakers and loved Mariah Carey (nobody's perfect). Her single and video, Love Communication, was released with a burst of publicity. In a matter of months, there were fan shrines all over the Web.

But these sites soon skidded to a halt, along with Kyoko's career. The single failed to capture the public's imagination (to hear it is to understand why) and a follow-up never appeared. Kyoko Date was shelved, filed away in a kind of endless rehab/prison loop.

So was it a crap idea or just ahead of its time? We should know soon, given last month's launch of Webbie Tookay, the world's first entirely virtual (I was going to say two-dimensional, but they've been making them that way for years) supermodel at ***www.illusion2k.com***.

Need a bikini girl to hand out virtual goodies? Do we have the bimbo for you!

The creation of the Elite agency, –which has stabled famous fillies from Linda Evangelista to Kate Moss – Webbie is 'a new concept of beauty for the next millennium', according to excited boss John Casablancas, who admits to being responsible for her 'aesthetic parameters'. Of course, some part of Webbie's appeal to the beauty broker may be that she doesn't charge $10,000 to get out of bed, arrive at work coked to the gills or treat the staff like something a corgi left behind, but that's another story.

Elite has spun off a new company, Illusion2K, to develop a range of digital models to participate in 'virtual fashion shows, photo sessions for fashion magazines, publicity films, TV programs and Internet projects.' In short, they'll be available to help sell anything you can drape a body over. 'Need a bikini girl to hand out cigarettes in your cybermall carpark? Do we have the bimbo for you!'

If only Kyoko had been a brainless male rock star instead of a sweet-natured pop singer, supermodel Webbie might have had the perfect boyfriend.

On the internet in seconds.

Find your book in seconds.

Order your book in seconds.

Go back for seconds.

amazon.co.uk

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Amazon.co.uk is the exciting new way to shop for books on the internet. It's fast, convenient, secure and easy too. You can find the book you want in seconds from a selection of over 1.5 million titles and with up to 50% savings. We can even gift-wrap. Our online store is open 24 hours a day throughout the year, so you can shop when it suits you.

www.amazon.co.uk

PAUL SIMPSON
THE MODEM THINKER

What's in a name? Quite a lot, apparently...

As a hack who started writing on a typewriter, I have never lost the horribly analogue belief that the speed at which a page downloads is directly proportional to the force with which I hit the mouse. If there's anything worse than waiting for the screen to refresh, our generation's answer to watching paint dry, it's registering on one of those sites which demands a password and a name before you enter its virtual cave.

Because I often log on where everybody has logged before, all the normal subscriber names and passwords are gone. So I now register using celebrities' obscure real names. Last week I was rejected by a site which already had a subscriber called Dino Crocetti Jnr (Dean Martin's real name) so in desperation I registered as Joseph Vissarionovich Djugashvili, the kind of moniker which makes it easy to see why its owner preferred to be called Stalin.

That got through but my password failed until I tried 'Delmore Schwartz' a mad American poet after whom Lou Reed named a Velvet Underground track. Trouble is, I have now registered on so many sites and roundtable discussions I can hardly remember which name and password I have used on each. Am I Crocetti, (which works occasionally), Djugashvili or, Delmore? On one site I had to log on as Delmore 11 which raises the frightening prospect that hordes of people called Delmore are using the Web. So I am suffering from a virtual identity crisis, a digital multiple personality disorder.

All the normal names are gone, so I now use celebrities

At least Amazon.com let me register as myself when I bought a book of poetry by Delmore Schwartz. I'd been scouring second-hand bookshops for years for this and here it was, a drag and drop away. That incredible choice is what makes the Internet such a fiendish invention. I still remember the year (1983) when the MP for W H Smiths got a law through parliament which said you could buy any CD you wanted as long as it was by Phil Collins, Dire Straits or Sade. (I exaggerate, of course: you could also buy Now That's What I Call Music 7 if you were really desperate).

And contrary to propaganda, having shopped over the Net, I have not (and I checked with my personal manager Trevor) experienced any Third World national debt-style holes in my bank balance. Actually that's wrong: I haven't experienced any *unexpected* Third World national debt-style holes in my bank balance.

'There's only one Joseph Djugashvili...'

SITE WATCH

NEW AND APPROVED

A quick round-up of the best new sites on the Web

SPORTS.COM
www.sports.com
As yet Sports.com only covers football, but promises to expand to cover rugby, cricket, Formula 1 and golf. The football section is great for sourcing news, and has handy sections for the latest transfers, statistics and photos.

FREE MONEY
www.freemoney.fm
Show me the money! It's as simple as this, log on every day, answer a couple of pretty simple questions and you're entered in a prize draw for £1000. That's the chance to win a grand every day. What more d'ya need to know?

GOLDENGOALS.COM
www.goldengoals.com
A reasonably simple football prediction game offering a cool million for anyone clever enough (or lucky enough) to correctly predict the scores of seven Premiership games. Every entry costs you £2, but the rewards are handsome.

CONNECT WOMEN
www.connectwomen.com
Macmillan cancer relief are planning the biggest coffee morning in the world, online and off, on October 1. Register on the site for your free fundraising pack, learn how to make donations or visit the chat room.

SHOPGENIE
www.shopgenie.com
Comparing prices for a product on the Net can be a time-consuming business, but Shopgenie can help. If you know the product you want, but aren't sure where to buy it from, just input the details and Shopgenie will search through several online stores to find which is cheapest.

THE CONSUMER GATEWAY
www.consumer.gov.uk
Not the most exciting of sites, but extremely practical nonetheless. The consumer gateway is an online centre for consumer advice on a huge variety of topics, from buying a car to checking home safety – and it beats asking Anne Robinson for advice any day.

VOYEURISM

WEBCAMS OF THE MONTH

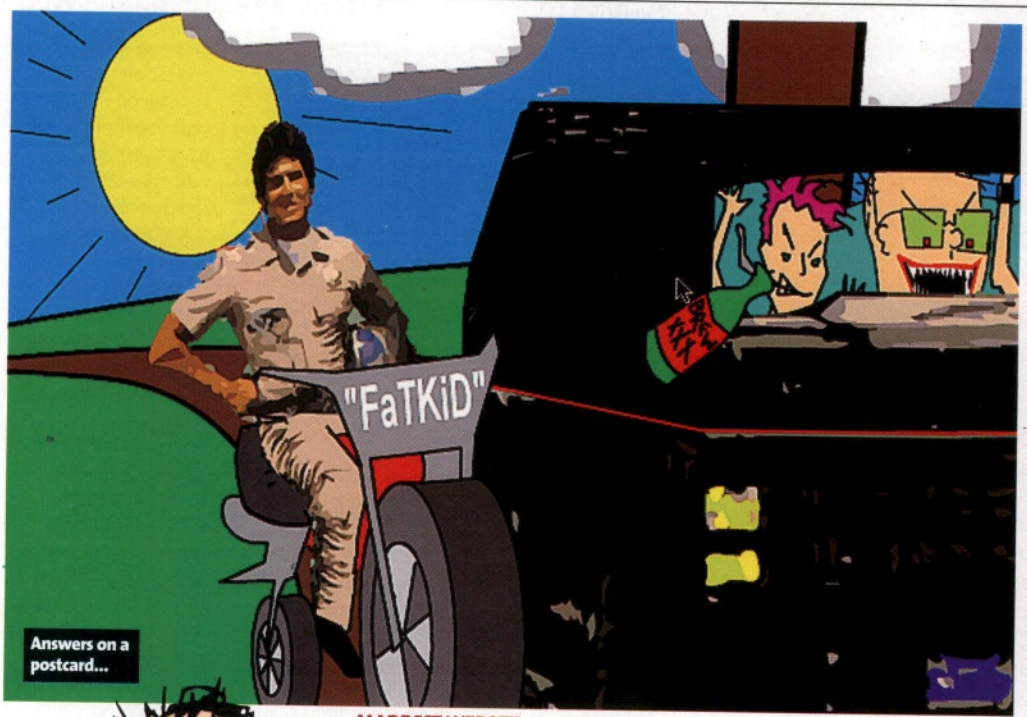
Webcams: not for obsessives. Really...

SEXYJIM.COM
members.spree.com/jdever/sexyjimentry.htm
Don't be put off by the porn style intro to this site – the only way you'll get offended by this site is if you're repulsed by 'Sexy' Jim. The Webcam seems to hold preset pictures rather than live updates and he's even gone so far as to record sound of his voice for our 'enjoyment.' Worth a visit just to see how low the human race really can stoop.

JUNE HOUSTON'S GHOSTWATCHER
www.flyvision.org/sitelite/Houston/GhostWatcher/
If there's something strange in your neighbourhood, who you gonna call? Well, if you're June Houston you're gonna call everyone on the Internet. The poor girl is so worried and scared about things going bump in the night that she's set up Webcams and spotlights around the house and is asking us to monitor the pictures to see if there are any strange occurrences going on. Just make sure they don't slime you.

THE BEST, THE WORST AND THE WEIRDEST STUFF ON THE WEB

HEROES & ZEROS



Answers on a postcard...

MADDEST WEBSITE

HAVING IT LARGE...

Simply the best animated Web site we've ever seen. It's more South Park than Disney in terms of sophistication, but whatever the merits of the band behind the site, FaTKiD certainly know how to entertain online. The wonderful animations feature guest appearances from Bill Clinton and Mr T among others, all mooching about the page to a backdrop of '70s cop show theme tunes. We're not sure what any of it means but we don't care – just go and enjoy it. There is other stuff on the site, like info about the band and the latest news, but you'll be far too busy watching cartoons to worry about that. ***www.fatkid.net***

Amusing emails

A list of English language signs in foreign lands included these belters

In a Bangkok temple:
It is forbidden to enter a woman even a foreigner if dressed as a man.

Ad for donkey rides in Thailand:
Would you like to ride on your own ass?

In a Japanese hotel:
You are invited to take advantage of the chambermaid.

See ***www.jokes2go.com***

Gail Porter in clothes shock

BEST DOWNLOAD

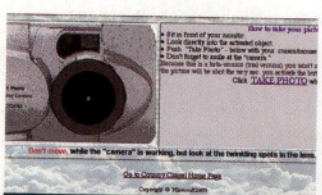
YOU CAN DO IT, IF YOU ICQ IT

ICQ is the original and best Instant Messaging software. Allowing you to chat or send messages in real time to your friends, it also tells you when they are online so you know when to expect a reply from them. You can hold a group conference and even play games using ICQ (I seek you – comprendez?). It's the best communication tool on the Net. ***www.icq.com***

MOST AMAZING TECHNOLOGY

SEEING DOUBLE

A beta version for some amazing software exists on the Cyber Camera site. Amazingly, if you look straight into the lens of the virtual camera on the Web page, you can click a link that will take your picture and display it on the page; yet another leap forward for technology and endless fun to boot. We don't know how it works, but when our editor tried it the likeness was truly amazing. Try taking your own photo at *www.geocities.com/Heartland/Acres/3072/camera2.html*


Now, say cheese for the nice Webcam

Net Charts 5

THE WEB'S FAVOURITES

MOST SEARCHED-FOR FILMS

Darth Maul gets lucky

1 Star Wars
2 Austin Powers
3 Blair Witch Project
4 The Matrix
5 Eyes Wide Shut

Whatever the experts and fans say about the film, there's no doubt that Star Wars is still winning the online film war. The position of Austin Powers is hardly surprising either, but with the proliferation of South Park sites, it's strange that Cartman and his mates don't make an appearance.

MOST SEARCHED-FOR FRUIT

The humble orange: cool

1 Orange
2 Apple
3 Banana
4 Tangerine
5 Plum

Unfortunately, this one's a bit ruined by the fact that Orange and Apple are also names of major companies. Why anyone looks for the others is anyone's guess – though ***bananas-on-the-web.org*** shows the kind of people we're dealing with.

MOST SEARCHED-FOR DESIGNER LABELS

1 Christian Dior
2 Ralph Lauren
3 Armani
4 Gucci
5 Tommy Hilfiger

MOST SEARCHED FOR COMPOSERS

1 Mozart
2 Vivaldi
3 Wagner
4 Bach
5 Beethoven

MOST SEARCHED-FOR MEDICAL CONDITIONS

1 Pregnancy
2 Menopause
3 Breast cancer
4 Multiple sclerosis
5 Thyroid

Charts courtesy of *www.searchuk.com*

Nope, it's not a cushion

Have you clicked yet?

With a 'Free' Internet Service Provider you are charged for every single Internet call you make.

Which means, should you have the inclination to spend all weekend on-line, every weekend for a month, it will cost you up to £115.20.*

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ClaraNET

www.clara.net

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*Based on weekend standard BT local call rate of 1p per minute, midnight Friday to midnight Sunday. **Monthly subscription required to qualify for free call time.

OK, so someone got a little ball in a hole

24 FRI No easy Ryder

The 33rd Ryder Cup, Boston

Friday Sept 24

Tickets are reputedly on sale for a whopping £300 each, so staying at home and watching the whole shebang on TV seems a sensible idea, especially since disputes over players' pay have already led to some of the top American contenders – including Tiger Woods – threatening to pull out.

At the time of going to press, no agreement had been reached. Still, if the event goes ahead as planned, European hopes will be riding high for yet another victory: the Americans have won just two out of the last seven contests in the biennial tournament series. ***www.ryder99.com*** *(For golf listings, also see* the net, *September, page 76-77)*

DEAR DIARY

SEPT 6 MONDAY Britain mourned Princess Diana at her funeral in 1997 ***www.althorp-house.co.uk/***

Birthday: **Greg Rusedski**, 26 ***freespace.virgin.net/greg.rusedski/***

No Greg, that's not Timmy's head

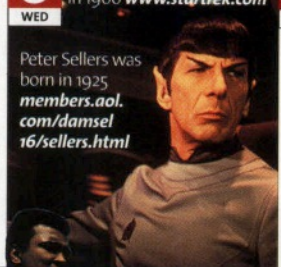
7 TUES The Blitz began in London in 1940 ***www.pnc.com.au/~insight/blitz/blitz.html***

Marie Curie isolated the first pure sample of radium in 1910 ***zen.sunderland.ac.uk/~hb5hco/open.htm***

Buddy Holly was born in 1936 ***www.cmgww.com/music/holly/holly.html***

8 WED *Star Trek* debuted on NBC in 1966 ***www.startrek.com***

Peter Sellers was born in 1925 ***members.aol.com/damsel16/sellers.html***



9 THURS British Masters golf begins ***www.worldgolf.com***

The world's first boxing match of more than 100 rounds took place in 1841, lasting over three hours ***www.boxing.com***

Birthday: **Hugh Grant**, 39 ***www.geocities.com/Hollywood/9900/index.html***

10 FRI *Eyes Wide Shut* goes on release at cinemas in the UK ***nicolekidman.org/***

Elias Howe patented the sewing machine in 1846 ***www.history.rochester.edu/Scientific_American/***

Birthday: Colin Firth, 39 ***www.colinfirth.com***

16 THURS **Arnold Schwarzenegger** became a US citizen in 1983 ***www.schwarzenegger.com***

Birthday: David Copperfield, 43 ***www.dcopperfield.com***

17 FRI **Muhammed Ali** beat Leo Spinks to win boxing's World Heavyweight Championship for a record third time in 1978 ***homepages.go.com/~danorthside/ali/ali.html***

Roddy McDowall was born in 1928 ***www.ameritech.net/users/rm_fan/roddy.html***

'I am the Greatest.' Modest, isn't he?

Jimi Hendrix died in 1970 at the age of 27 ***www.jimi-hendrix.com***

Greta Garbo was born in 1905 ***home.hiwaay.net/~oliver/garbo.html***

19 SUN Mickey Mouse made his first screen appearance in *Steamboat Willie*, released in 1928 ***www.disney.com***

Birthday: Jeremy Irons, 51 ***www.geocities.com/Broadway/Stage/8022/main.htm***

20 MON The Silver Pears Trophy was awarded to Roger Bannister in 1954 for his four-minute mile – the first ever ***www.runningpast.com***

Sophia Loren was born in 1934 ***www.spydersempire.com/sophia/***

26 SUN European Grand Prix at the Nurburgring ***www.itv-f1.com***

The Americas Cup was lifted by a non-US crew (the Aussies) for the first time in 132 years, in 1983 ***www.americascup.com***

Birthday: Serena Williams, 18 ***www.williamssisters.com***

27 MON The Queen Elizabeth liner launched in 1938 ***www.piergo.org***

Birthday: **Gwyneth Paltrow**, 27 ***www.gwynethpaltrow.org***

Gwyneth: see, she can put on a happy face

28 TUES William the Conquerer invaded England in (you've guessed it) 1066 ***battle1066.com***

Birthday: Mira Sorvino, 32 ***www.mira-sorvino.com***

29 WED Horse of the Year Show begins ***www.hoys.co.uk***

Birthday: Jerry Lee Lewis, 64 ***www.jerrylee-lewis.net***

Johnson: now what was he famous for?

30 THURS Sprinter **Ben Johnson** was sent home from the 1988 Seoul Olympics after failing a drugs test ***www.benjohnson979.com***

James Dean was killed when his Porsche careered off the road in Los Angeles in 1955 ***www.jamesdean.com***

Birthday: Martina Hingis, 19 ***www.martinahingis.com***

September-October

1 FRI Taffs, daffs and oblong balls

Rugby Union World Cup Oct 1-Nov 6

Rugby isn't celebrated in Britain with the same massive enthusiasm and media coverage as soccer – which is a shame, seeing that we're relatively good at it, on a good day. The home nations have a chance to prove this in the Rugby Union World Cup, which kicks off at the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff before taking in 18 different venues in five countries. As we went to press, the mighty All Blacks were favourites to conquer the 19 other countries taking part, closely followed by fellow antipodeans Australia and current champions South Africa. England were slightly behind in the betting, ranking fourth with odds of 8/1. ***www.rwc99.com***

'My other baton's this big – straight up'

11 SAT Circumstantial pomp

Last night of the Proms, Albert Hall

Saturday Sept 11

For some it's an excuse to become absurdly patriotic; for many others, it's just good, clean fun. Every year millions around the globe passionately join in the rendition of such emotion-stirring classics as *Land of Hope and Glory*, *Rule Britannia* and *Jerusalem* at this, the culmination of the two-month-long season of Henry Wood Promenade Concerts. This year viewers will be treated to the spectacle of respected actor Jeremy Irons as a soloist. Expect furiously waved flags and Union Jack hats aplenty.

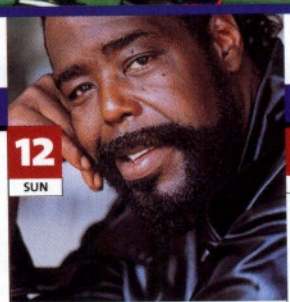
www.bbc.co.uk/proms/index.shtml

WORDS: SARAH WAKELY; PICTURES: ALLSPORT,REX, RETNA, SCIENCE PHOTO LIBRARY, SIPA PRESS

11 SAT Last Night of the Proms, Albert Hall ***www.bbc.co.uk/proms/index.shtml***

Professor Tidwissel's Burglar Alarm became the first newspaper comic strip in 1875 ***www.cagle.com/prolinks/library/NYnewsSURVEY.asp***

Birthday: Harry Connick Junior, 32 ***www.hconnickjr.com***



12 SUN Future president John F Kennedy married Jacqueline Bouvier in 1953 ***www.jfkcollection.com/***

Birthday: **Barry White**, 55 ***grove.ufl.edu/~clh/BW.htm***

13 MON *The Mousetrap* became Britain's longest-running play in 1957 after nearly 2000 performances ***www.hi.is/~ragnaj/***

Traffic lights became standard on Britain's roads in 1929 ***www.geocities.com/CapeCanaveral/Launchpad/1552/signalfan.html***

Birthday: Ben Savage, 19 ***fly.to/pennbrooke***

14 TUES Britain adopted the Gregorian calendar in 1752 ***es.rice.edu/ES/humsoc/Galileo/Things/gregorian_calendar.html***

The Soviet Lunik II spacecraft became the first man-made object on the moon after crash-landing in 1959 ***users.evl.net/~nikishka/s&s.htm***

Birthday: Sam Neill, 52 ***metalab.unc.edu/samneill/***

15 WED Alexander Fleming (accidentally) discovered **penicillin** in 1928 ***www.san-marino.k12.ca.us/~summer1/1997/cc/fleming.html***

Birthday: Prince Harry, 15 ***www.etoile.co.uk/Royal.html***

21 TUES Prince Charles admitted on TV that he talks to plants in 1986 ***www.princeofwales.gov.uk***

Stonehenge was sold for £6000 at auction in 1915 ***www.geocities.com/Athens/Atrium/4963/***

Birthday: Ricki Lake, 31 ***www.spe.sony.com/tv/shows/ricki/index.html***

22 WED ITV offered Britons an alternative to BBC with its first broadcast in 1955 ***www.itv.co.uk***

Birthday: Nick Cave, 42 ***www.badseed.org/caveinn/***

23 THU German astronomer Johann Gottfried Galle discovered the planet Neptune at the Berlin Observatory in 1846 ***www.seds.org/billa/tnp/neptune.html***

Birthday: **Bruce Springsteen**, 50 ***www.brucespringsteen.net***

24 FRI *A Midsummer Night's Dream* opens at cinemas ***www.shakespeare.com***

33rd Ryder Cup begins in Boston ***www.ryder99.com***

Jim Henson was born in 1936 ***www.henson.com***

25 SAT PAYE taxation was introduced in Britain in 1943 ***www.uktax.demon.co.uk***

Birthday: Catherine Zeta-Jones, 30 ***members.tripod.com/zetajones/***

OCT 1 FRIDAY Rugby Union World Cup begins ***www.rwc99.com***

Nigeria, Britain's biggest colony, became an independent state in 1960 ***www.nigeria.com***

Birthday: **Julie Andrews**, 64 ***www.foxhome.com/soundofmusic/***

'Please let me play with the Von Trapps'

2 SAT Mahatma Gandhi was born in 1869 ***web.mahatma.org.in***

Birthday: Sting, 48 ***stingetc.com***

3 SUN Germany became officially reunified in 1990 ***www.geocities.com/Athens/Rhodes/6916/***

Birthday: **Neve Campbell**, 26 ***www.nevecampbell.dk***

Snoopy first appeared in newspapers in 1950 ***www.unitedmedia.com/comics/peanuts/***

Russia became the first country to successfully launch a satellite in 1957 ***www.nasa.gov***

Charlton Heston born in 1924 ***home.earthlink.net/~darkr/charlton/***

5 MON The Beatles' first hit, *Love Me Do*, was released in 1962 ***www.rarebeatles.com***

Birthday: **Kate Winslet**, 24 ***www.kate-winslet.org***

Kate – will Leo be invited to the bash?

inbox

Send your letters to:
Inbox, *the net*, 38-42 Hampton Road, Teddington, Middlesex TW12 0JE
or email us at ***inbox@thenetmag.co.uk***

READER'S LETTER OF THE MONTH

Dear thenet,

I was delighted that you featured some of the better scooter sites on the Net (*What Website?*, September). Just one thing, though – your use of the word 'nerd' in every other line. Perhaps you would care to come to a scooter rally some time and shout that out? I'm sure this Mod and many more would be only too happy to give you our views on it. And as for your line: 'Well, if a proper motorcycle's too much for you...', I sold my Honda FireBlade recently so I could keep my scooter on the road. Please consider this a slapped wrist. Next time it will be a deckchair round the head.

Alan Wheeldon
alan.wheeldon@btinternet.com

Scooters: the real transport of real men

Dear thenet,

I use a BT residential line to connect to my ISP's K56 number. Although I have a K56 Flex V90 modem, my connection speed is always 28,800bps. Everything I read tells me that I should be able to get a faster connection – which my ISP (Primex) also tells me – but BT says that 28,800bps is the maximum they can provide with my type of line, even though the gain has been increased.

I would dearly love to go back to BT and continue bashing my head against their brick wall armed with more informed ammunition as to exactly why they should be providing me with a better service, so your expert comment really would be greatly appreciated.

Tony Read
adr@kodak.com

There may be several reasons why you're not getting more then 28,800 from your modem. If BT claim it's the line, this may be because you have had a second line installed and instead of adding a new connection, they are sharing one existing line, therefore halving the bandwidth available. Find out if this is the case from BT themselves.

Also, make sure that your modem and ISP are compatible. V.90 is now the standard 56k modem connection, having taken over from x2 and K56. Visit your modem maker's site to ensure you have the latest updates for your modem, just in case.

*It could be that the port your modem is connected to is not set to run fast enough. You can change the speed of the modem and the port from the systems control panel. Tools that will do this automatically include Net Medic (**www.vitalsigns.com**).*

Dear thenet,

Thanks a lot for a superb mag. For the food and drink section of *Need To Know*, why not try the Heinz (the baked beans company) Web site? It's a brilliant history of the company decade by decade, and it includes pictures and sounds of the particular era. It's easy to navigate and is lots of fun for nostaglic oldies like me or youngsters. I am not connected to the company – I just like their product!

Steve Page
northolme@hallgate.karoo.co.uk

Dear thenet,

Your magazine is excellent – my Net phone bill has trebled since your first issue, but what do I care? I've totally given up on real life now.

What I really wanted to tell you is that there is a superb site for *Homicide*, the TV show (***www.nbc.com/homicide***), which has interactive crime-solving, loads of background info and very intense and honest interviews with everybody concerned with its production.

So thanks for your review of the *NYPD Blue* site (which is also very good in its own right) because that gave me the cue to look for the site of the best programme on telly. Keep on keeping on.

Anita Strutt
nitabee@hotmail.com

Keep on keeping on? Dear oh dear...

Heinz: the foodstuff of real men

MAIL MONKEY It's a right royal knockout...

From: mailmonkey@chimp.co.uk
Sent: Monday, August 16, 1999
To: princephilip@buckpalace.co.uk
Subject: Haven't they got any real news to write about?

Dear Phil,

Imagine my shock when the papers arrived this morning and you were plastered all over the front again. What a fuss over nothing. A few off-the-cuff remarks of the kind Bernard Manning's been making perfectly harmlessly for years, and all of a sudden the PC brigade are all over you like a rash.

That's the trouble with this country nowadays: a monkey can't even indulge in life's simplest pleasures without some killjoy spoiling his fun. I tried to explain that to the police after the unfortunate incident with the residents at the old people's home, the zebra crossing and my Mazda MX5, but they weren't having any of it. In my day, it was survival of the fittest – if they can't run, they've got it coming. Apparently, the case comes up next month.

And all the while, this obsession with minor road traffic accidents (they tell me several of them can still walk, for goodness' sake) and silly slips of the tongue lets the real wrong-doers get away scot-free. If the papers really want a story, they should turn up at Wogan's gaffe on a Friday evening and ask for the 'executive special combo'. It's simply shameful the sort of thing that goes on round there...

Anyway, you and Liz need some positive publicity to get these people off your backs. Don't worry, I've sorted it. I'm having some kids from the local council estate bussed in on Sunday. Breaks my heart to see how disadvantaged some of them are. I'll treat them to a slap-up dinner, invite the papers round and you can say a few kind words, shake a few hands; you know the drill. The whole thing'll take no more than an hour, and I know it'd mean so much to those poor children. And, of course, when we've finished we can take them out the back and set the dogs on them. Corbett's promised to bring some shooters – should be a great laugh, I reckon.

See you there,

Mail monkey

www.guns.com

www.royalinsight.gov.uk

www.royalarchive.com

www.savethechildren.org

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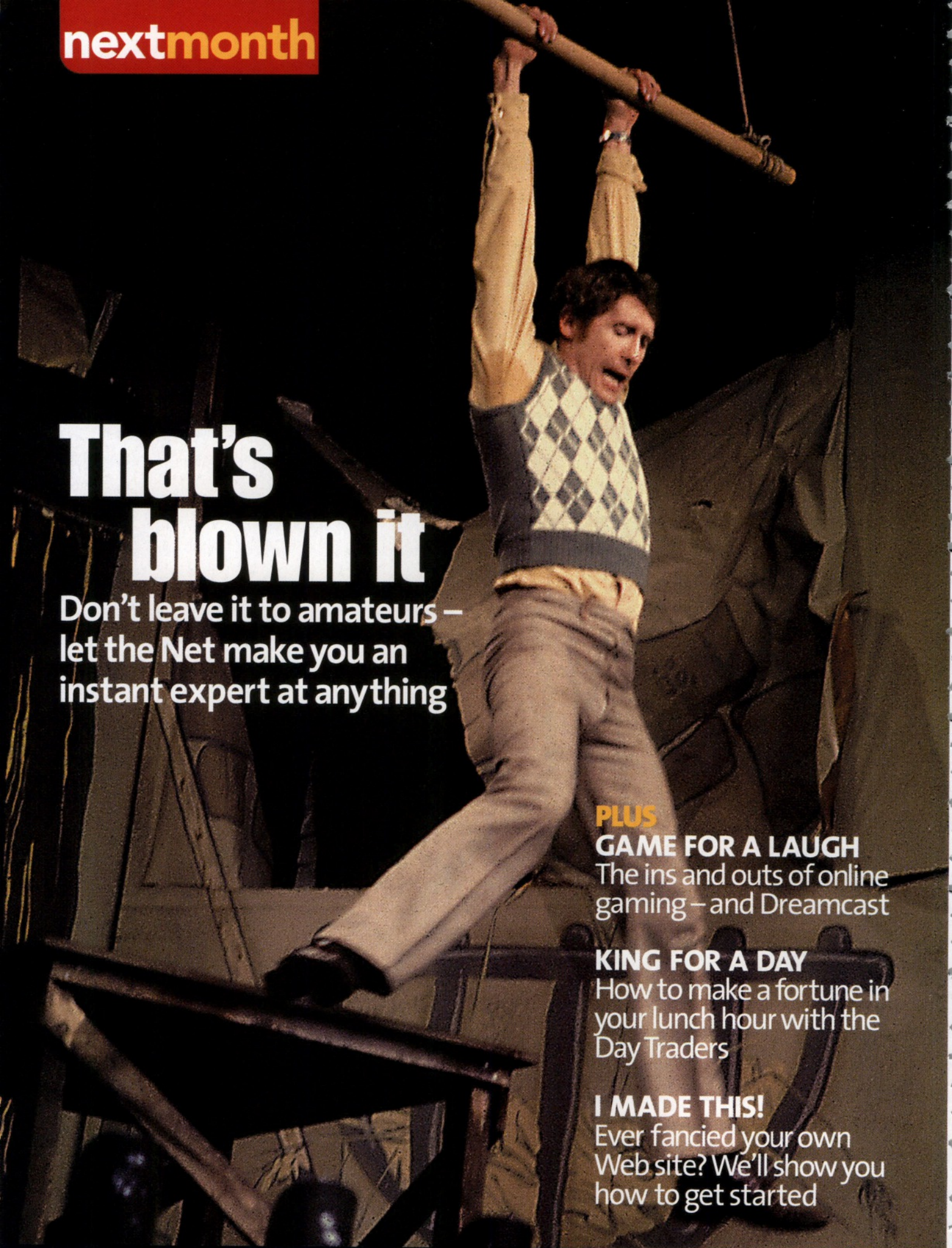
.com Get online to www.ministryofsound.com for your chance to win the party of a lifetime.

nextmonth



That's blown it

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GAME FOR A LAUGH
The ins and outs of online gaming – and Dreamcast

KING FOR A DAY
How to make a fortune in your lunch hour with the Day Traders

I MADE THIS!
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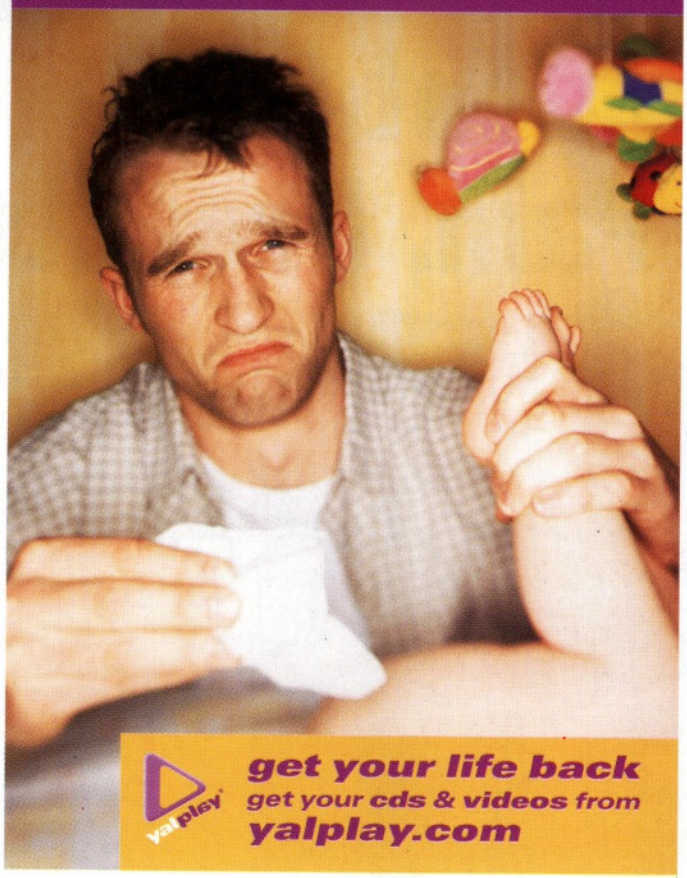
November issue on sale Wednesday, 6 October

thenet

you know you need yalp when -



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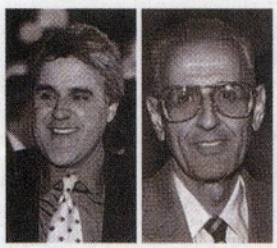
INSIDE

Leno, Kevorkian Sign 10-Year Monologue-Joke Pact



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The Arts: What Were They?

Page 3C

L.A. Gangs' 'Increase The Peace' Movement Least Successful Movement Ever

Page 2A

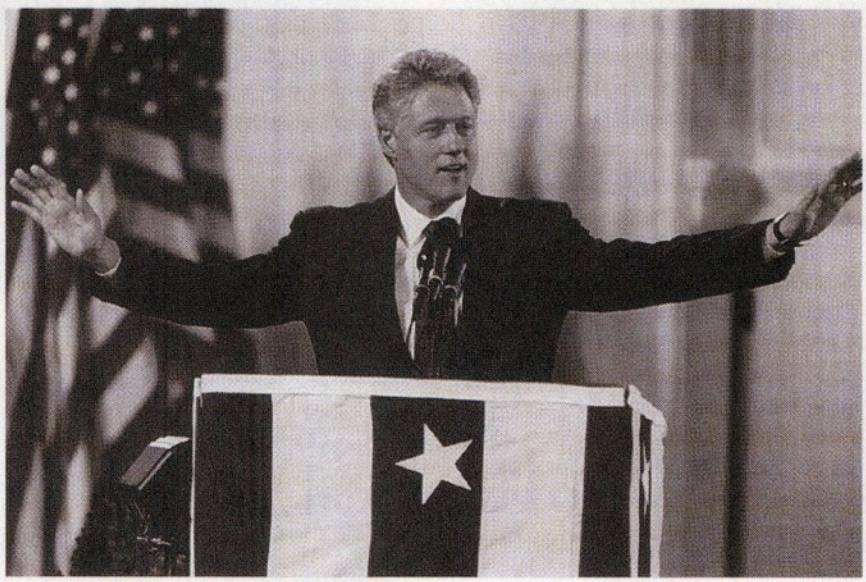
LOTTO

23 4 32 13 9

Losing lotto tickets can now be redeemed for 25 cents off any 10-gram vial of crack.

WEATHER

New President Feels Nation's Pain, Breasts



President Bill Clinton delivers his inaugural address.

WASHINGTON, DC—In his inaugural address to the nation Wednesday, President Bill Clinton delivered a message of compassion, telling Americans that he is fully committed to feeling their pain and, in the case of attractive young women, their breasts.

"As your president, I feel your pain," Clinton said from a podium overlooking a crowd of supporters and nubile campaign volunteers. "I would also very much like to feel your firm, plump breasts."

"The American people need to know that someone in Washington cares," he continued. "And the women of this country need to know that someone in Washington is willing to cup their breasts in both hands and give them a gentle squeeze."

Voters are praising Clinton's new vision for America.

"I met with President Clinton privately to discuss my economic situation, and he really seemed to understand how I feel," said Jennifer Langer, a 22-year-old nursing student from Little Rock. "That massage really helped."

Added Langer, "President Clinton was right: Going through tough financial times can really make you tense."

Said Georgetown University political-science professor Marcia Miller, "President

Tipper Gore Jerks Arrhythmically At Inaugural Ball

LITTLE ROCK, AR—Tipper Gore, celebrated crusader for decency and wife of newly elected Vice President Al Gore, jerked arrhythmically to a variety of musical numbers at the gala Inaugural Ball Wednesday.

Dedicated to restricting minors' access to objectionable music through her Parents' Music Resource Center, Gore appeared most basic concepts of rhythm as she awkwardly lurched to and fro, celebrating her husband's victory without any semblance of grace or style.

"I'm not much for this modern music, which is filled with images of rape and sodomy, yet is sold to our kids. But just because I don't have the slightest ability to relax and follow simple dance steps enjoying myself," Gore said, clumsily rotating her pelvis and bobbing her arms as if in great discomfort.

Gore and her husband amused onlookers while attempting to slow-dance to "The Blue Danube." The experiment was aborted after approximately two minutes, when a red-faced Tipper Gore called the composition "immoral and grossly sexu-

READ IT AND WEEP

No3 THE ONION
www.theonion.com

When the Founding Fathers set sail for the New World on the Mayflower, they forgot to pack the irony. America adopted the English language, but our sophisticated sense of humour failed to cross the pond. Today we regard Benny Hill as a rather seedy, embarrassing old uncle who ought to be kept away from young girls. Yet in the Midwest, couchbound Yanks still guffaw at his 'hilarious' bottom-pinching antics, which continue to occupy prime-time slots.

Home-grown US humour isn't much better. But the occasional exception proves the rule. Satirists like Lenny Bruce and PJ O'Rourke shine out because they had so much to attack, and so few others to share their material with. And now there's The Onion.

'Don't let our success fool you,' says managing editor Rob Siegel. 'We would be far better received in England. For the most part our humour is totally lost on our fellow countrymen. No one ever went bankrupt underestimating the stupidity of the great American public.'

The original Onion was – and remains – a weekly satirical paper printed and distributed in Madison, Wisconsin. After a couple of false starts it evolved into a straight-faced parody of a bland American regional newspaper. It is a work of some genius, written and produced entirely in character. It's not until you pay close attention to the headlines that you realise what's going on. Stories like 'Drugs win drugs war,' and 'Princess died as she lived: in incredible plushness' would not make it onto the pages of the Smalltown Examiner.

'For the most part our jokes are totally lost on our fellow Americans'

And then the Net happened. Like the original, The Onion's Web edition is an exact replica of the offerings of the big news organisations. 'I suppose that's partly why we became so successful,' says Siegel. 'Now you can read The Onion from your desktop at work, and unless your boss looks closely it seems

WORDS: BEN OLIVER

TEARS OF LAUGHTER The Onion is a many-layered thing...

the ONION

News in Brief

Top Story

In The News

WHEN NOT IN LAS VEGAS

Editorial

THE PLAYERS

American presidents and politics get The Onion treatment. Let's face it: there's no shortage of material.

Lone Teen Rebels Against Mandatory-Nametag Policy

DULLSVILLE

Jerry Springer takes ordinary people and makes prime-time TV out of them. The Onion takes it a step further, and makes headline news out of the dullest details of suburban lives. Subtle and hilarious.

Christ 'Categorically Denies' Speaking To Lutheran-College Administrator

BAD TASTE

Religion, race, abortion, gun control and mad right-wing militiamen: if it causes controversy in the States, The Onion will take a cheap shot at it. Wisely, they keep their office address a secret.

as if you're on CNN's site. I mean, if you're slacking and you want to look at porn you'll have pictures of cavorting naked women all over your screen. That'll just get you fired.'

But the key difference is that slackers worldwide can now read The Onion. It has gone from a local institution to an international phenomenon. Web accesses are in the millions, a best-selling anthology of front pages has been published and a prime-time TV special is planned.

And it's still funny. That may be because the staff haven't been turned into corporate Net zillionaires overnight. 'We thought that having a best-selling book would make us incredibly wealthy. But once you've split the money between the 22 people who wrote it you're left with a couple of thousand, if you're lucky.'

'We've become famous very quickly, but from here it feels like a glacial rise. There's no tangible difference in our lives. We're not being invited to parties or rubbing elbows with models and actors. We're still stuck here in Madison. Our offices are still the same, just some dopey writers sitting around and a bunch of kitsch crap on the walls. It's like a student dorm.'

Siegel is 27 and joined The Onion straight from college. He left New York for Wisconsin to begin his media career, probably the only person in history to do so. 'I wrote and asked if I could join, and the guys just said yeah, come in. That was when we were really small. If you did that today we'd probably just reject you. But the people we take on don't come out of the standard Harvard comedy pipeline nor have a background as trained news professionals. A lot aren't even college graduates.'

Despite the growth, the lack of vast sponsorship deals means they are still prepared to take risks. The Onion's stock stories are send-ups of national politics ('President feels our pain, breasts') and banal tales of suburban life written up as local interest stories in perfect journalese ('Area man would like fries with that'). But the writers do not refrain from attacking more sensitive subjects.

'There really is nothing we're uncomfortable saying. But we'll get together and think about whether we have the right take on something. We won't be crass just for the sake of it, or we'd sound like a bunch of assholes.'

Recent Onion targets have included the wave of gun massacres and the rise of America's Christian Right. Isn't this unnerving, in a country where abortion clinics get fire-bombed?

'Occasionally we do screw up, but we ignore the criticism and keep our office address unlisted,' says Siegel. 'There are ways to deal with kooks. Most of them just email us, because it's easy.'

The kind of people offended by intelligent, free-thinking satire probably wouldn't go to the effort of picking up a print edition of The Onion. But the Internet can make it hard to avoid. 'If you go to a search engine and look for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome you might return ten news stories. One of them might be from The Onion, and until you read it you'll think it's just like all the rest. By the time you realise it's a spoof you're already horribly offended. We kind of trip people up like that.'

But are Siegel and his team grateful to the Internet for bringing them fame, if not fortune? 'I don't really surf the Net that much. At the risk of sounding arrogant I can't really name one comedy site I truly admire. I think written comedy is a bit of a dead-end right now. All the funny people want to write for TV.'

'We're more likely to make jokes about the Internet. Like anything new and exciting, it's prone to hyperbole. It's one of the great hypes we try to deflate. I compare the Net to television, which everyone thought would make high schools obsolete.'

And the greatest disadvantage of the Internet is that – on the whole – you cannot take it into the toilet with you. Does Rob Siegel fear for the future of The Onion's print version? 'Oh man, no way. We thrive in print. We won't abandon it. As long as people crap, they'll need newspapers.'

Christian Right Ascends To Heaven

Leaders of the Christian Right follow Jesus into His Heavenly Kingdom.

TULSA, OK—At the stroke of midnight, Jan. 1, 2000, the clouds opened above the Bible Belt and a golden staircase appeared for all born-again Christians who do not bear the Mark of the Beast to ascend into Heaven and enjoy Everlasting Salvation.

Night turned to day as Jesus Christ appeared at the top of the staircase in a blinding white sun-beam to select only 1,000 believers for ascension into Heaven, as outlined in the Book of Revelation.

"Follow Me," the bearded, unkempt Jew told His assembled flock as He unrolled a papyrus scroll bearing a list of names. The list was a veritable Who's Who of the Christian Right. "Pat Buchanan, Bob Dornan, Jerry Falwell, Fred Phelps, Ralph Reed, Trent Lott..." Jesus read on, as those named followed Him into the clouds.

Millionaire cable-TV executive and right-wing politician Pat Robertson smiled gleefully as he slowly climbed the stairs. "I've been waiting for this moment all my life," he said, his three-piece suit shimmering in the beatific glare.

"I am going to a place where everybody is like me, filled with Christian love and understanding," said conservative talk-show host and two-time presidential candidate Buchanan. "There will also be a shared hatred of gays."

Sources close to Jesus say He and Buchanan will meet privately later this week to discuss a gay-killing meteor, which could smite the Earth's wicked Sodomites by as early as 2002.

"Remember, Jesus loves you," said from atop case, flank Buchanan also waves damned.

"So long," exclaimed.

Noted astronomer and atheist Cori Sagan, whose skull is now the drinking gourd of Satan, spoke from the fourth level of Hell, saying, "Save me, Jesus. I was wrong to value scientific reasoning over divine faith. Please, take me with you."

The chosen Christians are expected to enjoy an eternity of worshipping God and singing hymns in Heaven. "I expect it will be a great deal like being in Sunday service, except it will never end," Robertson said. "I am very excited about it."

Front pages from the print edition – squint and you could be reading The Times

'We won't be crass for the sake of it, or we'd sound like assholes'

'TV" speech by Compton resi- overcome insufficient bass." Civil-rights activists march on Al's Electronics Emporium in Compton.

Death Of 500,000 Somalis Momentarily Distracts Nation From Dream Team Excitement

In the past year, an estimated 500,000 Somalis have died from famine, murder, civil war and disease, Red Cross officials reported Wednesday, an announcement that briefly distracted Americans from U.S. Olympic basketball "Dream Team" fever.

"It's shocking, absolutely shocking," said 31-year-old Atlanta resident Kenny Gund upon learning of the African genocide. "The thought of Michael Jordan, Larry Bird and Magic Johnson playing together on the same team just

The U.S. Olympic Dream Team

which is heavily favored to take the gold at this summer's Barcelona Games.

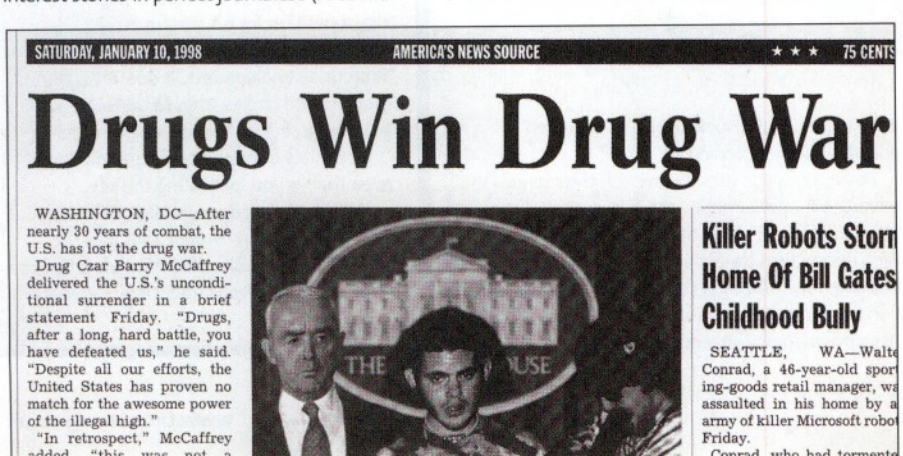
"I realize things are bad in Somalia," Gund said, "but we're talking about the greatest basketball team ever assembled, a team so good that all-time greats like Charles Barkley and Karl Malone are not even good enough to be starters. Can you imagine a team that has Clyde Drexler and John Stockton coming off the bench? It's hard to comprehend."

Across the U.S., news of the

ple to stop discussing the Dream Team for as long as 15 seconds.

"I hear there's mass graves all across the Somali countryside," said Tim Kroeger of Arlington Heights, IL. "All I know is, the French National Team is going to need a mass grave once Michael Jordan gets through destroying them in Barcelona."

Kroeger said he has no plans to think about Somalia again, unless the African nation's basketball team is scheduled to play the Dream Team in the


SATURDAY, JANUARY 10, 1998 AMERICA'S NEWS SOURCE ★ ★ ★ 75 CENTS

Drugs Win Drug War

WASHINGTON, DC—After nearly 30 years of combat, the U.S. has lost the drug war.

Drug Czar Barry McCaffrey delivered the U.S.'s unconditional surrender in a brief statement Friday. "Drugs, after a long, hard battle, you have defeated us," he said. "Despite all our efforts, the United States has proven no match for the awesome power of the illegal high."

"In retrospect," McCaffrey

Killer Robots Storm Home Of Bill Gates' Childhood Bully

SEATTLE, WA—Walte Conrad, a 46-year-old sport ing-goods retail manager, wa assaulted in his home by a army of killer Microsoft robo Friday.

Conrad, who had tormente

THE ONION

WHAT IS IT? Lacerating, subtle, topical wit. From the States, yet very un-American
LAUNCHED July 1995
TRAFFIC 500,000 impressions per week
WEB STAFF 20
BASE Madison, Wisconsin
KEY FEATURES Weekly dose of satire, poking fun at big political players and banal small-town life alike. Also entertainment reviews

NUNS ON THE NET Inside a cloistered Convent

TYBURN CONVENT

www.tyburnconvent.org.uk
www.native.uk.com
www.farnboroughabbey.org
www.parkminster.org.uk

'Nuns and monks have always been at the forefront of communication,' says designer Luke Davies. 'So now we're almost into the 21st century they're bound to want a Web site.'

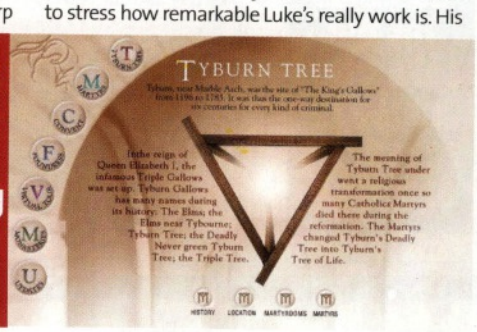
That's his explanation for how nuns living in a historic convent in the centre of London – lacking even a basic PC – have wound up with a very sharp interactive Web site. 'Luke did the whole thing for us,' says Mother General Mary Saviour of Tyburn Convent. 'We pray, and he designs Web sites.'

They asked him to get them online after the success of Luke's other religious sites. Demand for his Parkminster and Farnborough Abbey pages nearly brought down BT. The former has a virtual reality tour of a Carthusian monk's cell – normally, you have to join up to get inside one. 'The religion isn't shoved in your face. They're all about amazing buildings and the fascinating, often secret lives of the people who live in them.

'The monks are the most clued-up technically. They communicate with the Vatican and each other by email in Latin. The nuns don't have a computer but they're better organised, far more so than professional businesses. I love working with them; they know exactly what they want. I suppose they have enough time to think about it.'

The Mother General agrees. 'We're not trying to say, "look here, we're terribly religious"; we just accept that lots of people are fascinated by the life of a cloistered nun, but can't access it directly. We're utterly convinced that the Internet is the best means of communication for us. We're prepared to work hard to communicate to everyone what we do and why we're here. And I want to stress how remarkable Luke's really work is. His work is beautiful to look at, but it's also both educational and interactive.'

Technically, the monks are clued up, emailing the Vatican in Latin


TYBURN TREE
Tyburn, near Marble Arch, was the site of 'The King's Gallows' from 1196 to 1783. It was thus the one-way destination for six centuries for every kind of criminal.
In the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, the infamous Triple Gallows was set up. Tyburn Gallows has many names during its history: The Elms; the Elms near Tyburne; Tyburn Tree; the Deadly Never green Tyburn Tree; the Triple Tree.
The meaning of Tyburn Tree under went a religious transformation once so many Catholics Martyrs died there during the reformation. The Martyrs changed Tyburn's Deadly Tree into Tyburn's Tree of Life.
HISTORY
LOCATION
MARTYRDOMS
MARTYRS

Davies does the sites for love not the money. His reward will – presumably – be in heaven. But the attention the sites have attracted has helped his Web design firm Native. 'I haven't been converted, but when the office gets busy I can see the attraction of a long period of solitude and silence. Maybe I'll go down for a weekend sometime.'

GANGLAND

My site for Reg... and Frankie

www.thekrays.co.uk
www.madfrankiefraser.co.uk

Both sites offers a lot of content. Reggie Kray even thanks you for visiting his site

Too much publicity got him banged up; now he hopes it might get him out. Reggie Kray has served 31 years of a recommended 30-year sentence for the murders of George Cornell and Jack 'The Hat' McVitie, and still has no immediate hope of getting out.

Mick Gallagher, a 51-year-old ex-builder turned Web designer, has created Kray's site, which invites people to sign a petition for the ex-gangster's release. He has also produced one for Reggie's fellow gangland legend 'Mad' Frankie Fraser. 'When I was a young man growing up in Islington I was into a bit of ducking and diving,' says Mick. 'But I never imagined I'd be associating with these people and arguing that they ought to be freed.'

It was Mad Frank that gave Mick his first taste of premier-league villainy. 'Frankie used to walk his little dog around Islington. I was fascinated by him. He's quite small and it's hard to believe some of the tales attributed to him. He's accommodating, but when he tells you what he did he's so cold and factual. The site lets him tell his story in his own words – no censorship – and lets people make their own minds up.'

Not a task to be taken lightly. But Mick must have made a good impression, because he soon had a call from an 'associate' of Reggie Kray. Mick sensibly agreed to put together a site that traces the twins' story and encourages visitors to sign a petition for his release. No detail is spared, but the site is honest, rather than a Tarantino-style gorefest. 'It doesn't set out to glorify these blokes,' says Mick. 'Reggie did bad things, but he has served his sentence.'

Both sites offer plenty of content. Reggie even thanks you for visiting the site.

With the work done, is Mick still mates with the mobster? 'Frankie calls into the office for tea occasionally.' With his little dog? 'Erm, the dog disappeared.' Dead? 'Probably.'

WORDS: BEN OLIVER; PICTURES: STEVE ORINO

Clients don't come much tougher: Gallagher (back) with Mad Frankie

BE THE PERFECT PARTNER

If you're a man and in a relationship, you're probably rubbish at it. So can the Internet help make you a far more thoughtful and caring partner?

We've already told you how to find love on the Net. What we didn't explain was that finding it is the easy bit. The hard part comes later when you've finished showing each other your record collections and you've heard all of each others' jokes. Twice. So this month we take a look at the joys of partnership; those little touches that help to keep the magic alive and well in a relationship. In particular we're concentrating on whether the Net can help overcome that perennial hurdle to happiness: the fact that blokes, while capable of being witty, charming, and romantic for oh, *minutes* at a time in the early days, have a tendency to prove dead idle, forgetful and utterly lacking in imagination by the time it gets to week five.

BUYING THAT LITTLE GIFT

BACK THEN... VS ...THE NET WAY

OH NO, IT'S THE ESSO FLORALS

See the guy sobbing into his Dilbert day-planner? That'll be another girl-friend's birthday forgotten, then. There are two ways out of this. The first is to empty the bank account and flee to start a new life in Uzbekistan. The second is to pop out at lunchtime, sell the car, give the funds to the concierge at the Savoy (plus £200 tip) and arrange an orchid and Bolly-strewn suite for the night. Then make out it was all carefully planned.

THE DREAM

You didn't forget, and called up somewhere classy (but, of course, not too flash) and briefed a personal shopper to save your love life. For most men this is the dream, as in 'dream on, sunshine'.

THE NIGHTMARE

You stop at the garage on the way home and buy the most expensive flowers they have. Since women have a genetic ability to spot filling station florals at half a mile, you'd be better off reconsidering Uzbekistan.

Thanks to the Net, not only the uber-rich can remain suave in the face of adversity

TASTE AND TIMING ON TAP

Think smooth: James Bond, Austin Powers, Des Lynam... Do these men end up rummaging behind bottles of Castrol in an attempt to find an uncrushed box of Milk Tray? No: they have other people to do it for them. Now, thanks to the Net, it's not only the *uber*-rich who can remain suave in the face of adversity. For a teeny amount of effort, other people can take care of taste and timing.

THE DREAM

You register with the likes of Flowers Direct and fill in dates of relevant anniversaries (first date, rather than when your team won the cup). They email you when each danger zone is due and lay on flowers and chocs. Remember her Mum's birthday, too, and you're quids in.

THE NIGHTMARE

You log on to the likes of Flowers Direct, end up perusing the Pandora Peaks fan page, forget her birthday and fail to notice that she's left you and gone off with Des Lynam.

And the winner is...

The Net, hands-down. Trust me on this one

A ROMANTIC BREAK

BACK THEN... VS ...THE NET WAY

ALL ROMANTIC WALKS LEAD TO LEEDS

Uh-oh, the weekend away: nothing is better calculated to cruelly expose the difference between men and women than this, possibly the ultimate test after the first visit to the partner's parents. She wants Latin-lover-style spontaneity and just a hint of domestic bliss. You're thinking more along the lines of a B&B in Leeds, because that's where the away game is this weekend. You check the small ads in the paper, she checks the small ads in the paper. You ask your friends, she asks hers.

THE DREAM

You discover a snug little country inn allied to a discrete health club: four-poster beds, stone fires and aromatherapy. Plus long, romantic walks, one of which just happens to lead to Elland Road in time for kick-off.

THE NIGHTMARE

The landlord turns out to be Rigsby. It's a Butlin's-type holiday camp... frequented only by evangelical Christians and Morris dancers.

She wants Latin-lover spontaneity but you're thinking: 'Where are they playing this week?'

LAST-MINUTE NEEDN'T BE LAST RESORT

Now we're talking. Go straight to Lastminute.com and take your pick from hotels near where you live, cheap weekends on the Continent or, if you're feeling fast and loose, a flight to Rio to samba away your Saturday. This service was just made for useless blokes: it eliminates all the need for effort, takes away any pretence of imagination and, as for spontaneity, it's a dream. Even if she does rumble exactly how you did it, it still smacks of wacky devil-may-care rather than lazy couldn't-give-a-damn.

THE DREAM

You find yourself with an all-inclusive romantic weekend in beautiful Venice for less than the cost of a cup of Bovril, a meat pie and a match programme. And they've got Eurosport.

THE NIGHTMARE

You find yourself in a Holiday Inn in Belgium. The landlord is Rigsby with a Flemish accent. It's a nudist camp full of overweight Germans. And the chips have mayonnaise on them.

And the winner is...

The Net again: it rewards a total lack of planning with cash savings

WORDS: STEVE SHIPSIDE; ILLUSTRATION: RIAN HUGHES

START EARNING POINTS HERE

Our pick of the best sites to continually surprise, please or just keep a partner

FLOWERS, CHOCS AND THE USUALS

www.harvestmoon.co.uk/perfume_shop_uk.htm for the scents and ***www.food-of-the-gods.co.uk*** for sweet and savoury goodies. As for the flowers: ***www.flowerdelivery.co.uk*** includes same-day delivery as long as you call before 1am; ***www.pavilion.co.uk/howards/florist.htm*** delivers anywhere in the world; ***www.flowercard.com*** sends fresh Jersey flower cards. Oh, and there's ***www.interflora.co.uk***

WEEKEND GETAWAYS

Biggest and best for weekends, hotels, show tickets, flights, and gifts is ***www.lastminute.com***. If you only visit one site this summer make it this one and there is a slim chance she may still be with you come winter. One for those not looking to stray too far is ***www.visitbritain.com***, as is B&B heaven at ***www.beduk.co.uk***

YOU NEED HELP...

To find home help or domestic cleaners near you try ***www.scoot.co.uk*** or ***www.yell.co.uk***. Just don't type in 'scrubbers' (you'll only get *Withnail and I* fan pages).

TO EARN SOME SERIOUS POINTS?

What about naming a star after someone? Go to ***www.nameastar.net*** and for just over $49 a bit of the galaxy is yours.

GETTING THE CHORES DONE

BACK THEN... VS ...THE NET WAY

REAL MEN CAN WEAR MARIGOLDS

Now we're in trouble. There have almost certainly been more domestics over the Marigolds and Mr Muscle than anything else, short of the remote control. Even a man who is normally happy to perforate anything in sight with a Black & Decker will turn into the dodgy geezer from the Flash advertisement the minute you bung a Brillo pad in his general direction. Now that Bob-a-Job Boy Scouts have bitten the dust, there's nothing for it but to bite the bullet. Remember, now: no scourers on non-stick.

THE DREAM

You're hot, sweaty, dripping with soapy water and you're wearing a pair of rubber gloves. She casts one look at your manly form and decides you have better uses than defrosting the freezer. Well, it's always like that in the car ads.

THE NIGHTMARE

You're hot, you're sweaty, you're dripping with soapy water and you're wearing a pair of rubber gloves. She calls out, 'Don't forget to do the Hoovering,' as she slips off to the pub with the girls.

DOMESTIC HELP IS ONLY A CLICK AWAY

OK, let's be honest, if it's chore crisis time and you so much as look in the direction of the keyboard, you're deader than whatever that thing is in the fridge behind the broccoli. If you think a little in advance, however, you could use the Net to find yourself a domestic cleaner who could make the place look less like the aftermath of a nasty accident in a biological warfare lab.

THE DREAM

There's this kind of cute woman who tells you your flat has been completely trashed by burglars. Realising the truth, you swiftly look up a cleaner, and get the opportunity to get talking.

THE NIGHTMARE

There's this kind of cute woman who tells you your flat has been completely trashed by burglars. Realising the truth when she notices that your computer's still there, she bids you a swift farewell.

And the winner is...

Not much in it this time. There's no way to escape your share of home care – apart from that flight to Uzbekistan, of course

JERRY'S FINAL THOUGHT*

The Net was invented by a gang of blokes who worked late... so log on and loaf

No matter how much society may seem to revolve around wealth, a caring relationship is the most valuable thing you'll ever possess. So it's only sensible that something so unique and precious should never be left in the hands of something so clumsy and stupid as a bloke. That's why the Net, with the help it offers to the forgetful, imaginatively challenged and lazy, may prove both the saviour of the human race, and the end of anniversary rows and nookie embargoes. Which shouldn't come as a surprise, because the Web was invented by blokes who worked late. So look after yourselves, and each other, by logging on... and loafing.

*That's Jerry Swinger, our local barman, who can always be relied upon for sound, mature, avuncular advice

You understand your products and market. We understand the Internet. Together, we can tailor a scaleable hosting solution to meet your requirements.

With our own network and on our own resources, we already provide a secure and extensive range of mission critical services to some of the best known names in business. We can do the same for you - simply, efficiently and cost effectively.

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Email & Web Hosting Packages:

All Email and Web Hosting packages also include: domain name registration or transfer, daily backups, Smart UPS, technical support until midnight daily.

Magic EBasic £40pa
- Unlimited Email addresses
- Single Email routing

Price excludes naming authority fees

Magic EPlus £75pa
- Unlimited Email addresses
- 10 POP Email boxes
- Remote control panel via web interface
- Multiple Email routing

Price excludes naming authority fees

Magic SoHo £130pa
- 30 MB Web/hosting space
- Unlimited Email addresses
- Single Email routing
- Full FTP access and personal CGI-BIN
- Remote control panel via web interface
- Full graphical site statistics

Price excludes naming authority fees

Magic Standard £155pa
- 50MB web/hosting space
- Unlimited Email addresses
- 10 POP Email boxes
- Multiple Email routing
- Full FTP access and personal CGI-BIN
- Remote control panel via web interface
- Full graphical site statistics

Price excludes naming authority fees

Magic from the Heart £195pa
Special Package
- 75 MB web/hosting space
- Unlimited Email addresses
- 15 POP Email boxes
- Multiple Email routing
- Unlimited Email autoresponders
- Full FTP access and personal CGI-BIN
- Remote control panel via web interface
- Full graphical site statistics

Price excludes naming authority fees
£10 from this package is contributed to charitable causes
Details: http://www.magic-moments.com/charity/

Magic Enterprise £255pa
- 100 MB Web/hosting space
- Unlimited Email addresses
- 20 POP Email boxes
- Multiple Email routing
- Unlimited Email autoresponders
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- Full FTP access and personal CGI-BIN
- Remote control panel via web interface
- Full graphical site statistics

Price excludes naming authority fees

No hidden set up charges!

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Database Facilities	from £200 pa
Filemaker Pro database hosting	from £200 pa
SSL secure server*	from £35 pa
Frontpage extensions (web hosting packages only)	£50 pa
Shopping cart systems	from £200 pa
Server Co location (from 64Kbps)*	from £3600 pa

*Set up charges apply

Naming Authority Fees

UK domains (.co.uk, .org.uk)	£20
Global domains (.com, .org, .net)	£45
Austria domains (.at)	£100
Bahamas domain (.bs)	£80
Belgium domain (.be)	£100
France domain (.fr)	£360
Germany domain (.de)	£165
Holland domain (.nl)	£45
Ireland domain (.ie)	£95
Libya domain (.ly)	£80
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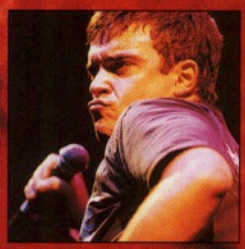


Guess who's coming to dinner?

The world's greatest pop stars, that's who. Getting closer to your favourite artists has never been easier thanks to the Net – and over the next eight pages we explore the best sites, meet the bands who love to be online and introduce the Web concert that's set to break all records. More tea, Bono?

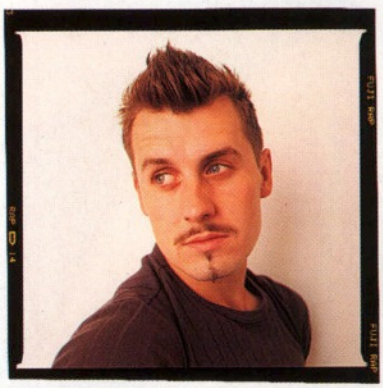
WWW.SEX, DRUGS & ROCK 'N' ROLL.COM

Scottish rockers Travis stand on the verge of superstardom – and the Web helped them get there, they tell Paul Winslow

Fran Healy asked poignantly: 'Why does it always rain on me?' on Travis' recent hit single. But at the moment it would seem he's got no cause for concern – the sun is positively beating down on the Scottish band.

Their phenomenally successful new album, *The Man Who*, has spawned three hit singles, yet Travis are – in many ways – the antithesis of your typical rock 'n roll band. For one, they've been together for eight years, during which time they claim never to have had an argument. And while other rock stars might have a reputation for indulging in illegal substances, Travis' addiction is different. Theirs is the Internet, which they reckon is a Class A substance. As such they spend much of their time on their Web site, nattering to fans.

The net met singer/songwriter Fran and guitarist Andy Dunlop, bassist Dougie Payne and drummer Neil Primrose to see what makes them tick – and why the Internet means so much to Travis.



You're not exactly archetypal music stars, are you? How do you feel about being in a successful band?

Fran: I've always felt quite awkward about it; that bands just get in the way. If it's a good tune you can sing it – you don't have to think of the band. Travis is like a chair. It serves a purpose.

Neil: We'll always be the way we are, and that annoys people because we don't play the game. But things are easier if you don't have to keep up a pretence, because you just act like you are.

Fran: You become stars naturally. I don't see the point in acting like one before you are. We're letting it happen to us, instead of letting us happen to it.

What is it about the Internet that you love so much?

Fran: If the Net was anything else it would be Class A and you wouldn't be able to use it – it's expensive, it's addictive and there's a whole ritual to it. The bit where you log on, when you hear the [does a creditable impression of a modem dialling up] – that could be the equivalent of sticking your skins together or cooking up. But it's legal, and I think that's great.

You obviously place great importance on your Web site. When did you first become aware of how useful it could be?

Fran: We've been into the Internet since January, and the Web site is very important to us. A mate who was at art school with us said: 'You should get a Web site.' He did it for us, and it's great. We had the idea of keeping it as basic as possible; user-friendly and nicely presented. We are 100 percent responsible for content. It's good that it is a friend who creates it because he can get stuff up there quickly. We're going to set it up so that we can add to it constantly when we're on the road, using a laptop. It gives the fans an idea of what's going on.

'If the Internet was anything else, it'd be Class A. But it's legal and it's great...'

You obviously appreciate the opportunity to stay so close to your fans by talking to them through bulletin boards and chat rooms...

Dougie: The best thing about the site is how it greatly reduces the gap between the band and all of the fans.

Fran: I was surprised how scared some bands are of their fans. I love the whole thing. The first thing I ask people is where they live. They could be at the bottom of the street or in Australia – and the bloke in Australia can say he's at the bottom of the street. You're able to lie your arse off.

Dougie: It's funny when we go in because sometimes people don't believe it's actually us. A friend of mine says that it must be an ego trip and I was like: 'What are you talking about, man?' I had never really thought about it like that. It's just a means of communication.

Fran: We are fans of the band as well. Travis are my favourite band – and I'm in it.

It must be nice to read what your fans think of you as well. Has it given you a chance to keep in touch with fans from the early days?

Neil: It gives you a chance to really hear what people are saying about you.

Dougie: We get people from ages back who we talk to. Sometimes the new people come along saying that Travis have sold out and then the old fans tell them to piss off.

How close do you actually get to the fans?

Fran: There's one Japanese girl who is always in the chat room. Recently she flew over to see the band in Scotland while she was staying in London. We found out whereabouts because she'd mentioned it to someone else in the chat room. The manager, myself and my girlfriend went to see her. We would never have been able to meet up if it hadn't been for the Web page.

And we had a guy the other night who told us he loved *Driftwood*. His four-year-old daughter knew all the words to the song, and it inspired her to collect driftwood on the beach. You just wouldn't get to hear that story without the Internet. No-one would go to the effort of buying a stamp and sending it. That's the other thing about the Net – it's instant.

Will other bands follow your lead?

Fran: It's surprising how long it's taken for the record companies to cotton on to the idea of it and how it's such a good thing. They didn't realise it was a tool that they could use, rather than competition.

Neil: Other bands will follow because you do something different and fans expect everyone to do it. You lead by example and that's how you change something. And that can't be a bad thing.

The Man Who *is on sale now in record shops*
Web site: ***www.travisonline.com***

Travis hear their dealer's got a new consignment of quality Web pages to shift

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NUMBER ONE STARS – IN YOUR LIVING ROOM

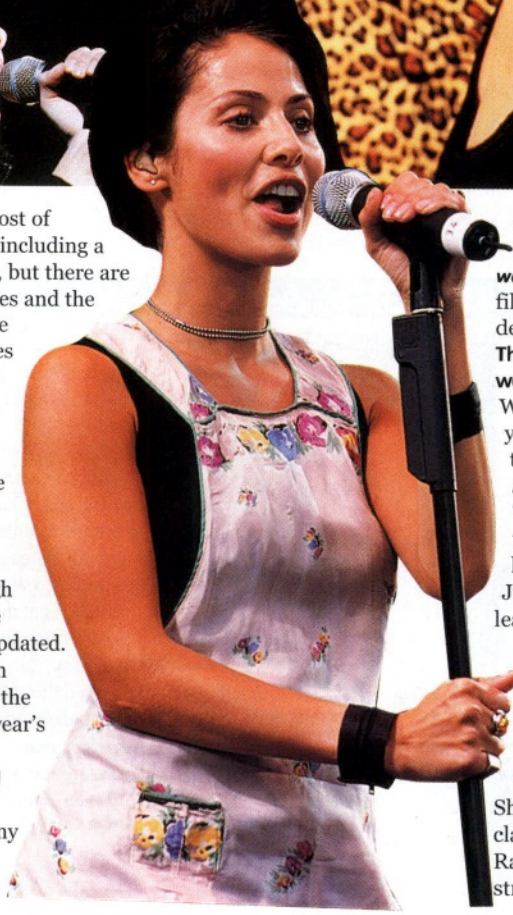
The Web has made it easier than ever to get closer to your favourite band. We checked out three top artists' Net offerings

NATALIE IMBRUGLIA

A pop star and a babe – there must be loads of sites dedicated to the wonderful Antipodean midget.
There are, and thankfully many of them seem just as concerned with her music as her looks. Unfortunately, several sites have disappeared or not been updated for a while – which is probably a result of the fact that she hasn't done much lately.
So which ones are the best?
Try Natalie Imbruglia's Almost Official Web site at ***www.imbruglia.com***, an excellent resource with a host of video and audio (including a recent Web chat), but there are also games, quizzes and the ubiquitous picture gallery, which goes back as far as her *Neighbours* days.
So another duff official site then?
No, not at all. The official site at ***www.natalie-imbruglia.co.uk*** is excellent, although some sections are currently being updated. The real gem is an archived video of the final date of last year's UK tour.
Where else should I be looking?
To be honest, many of the sites are much of a muchness. The best alternative is Imbruglian world, ***www.imbruglianworld.com***. Loads of video clips, audio files and an almost anal collection of desktop wallpapers are available.
That's brilliant, but quite predictable as well. Isn't there anything else?
Well, you can always bone up on your Natalie knowledge at Left of the Middle (***www.geocities.com/MotorCity/Flats/3847/***). It contains 'Did You Know?' classics, such as the fact that she took surfing lessons when she was younger. Just imagine that – an Aussie learning to surf...
Anything else?
For the truly bizarre, visit Bubbles of Love (***www.interaxtion.co.uk/bubblesoflove***) where the songs of Natalie Imbruglia are 'interpreted' in the way Shakespeare's texts are in English classes. Which might be useful for Radiohead – but does *Torn* really stretch that far?

Natalie's songs are interpreted like Shakespeare texts at school

Natalie: a Net wonder

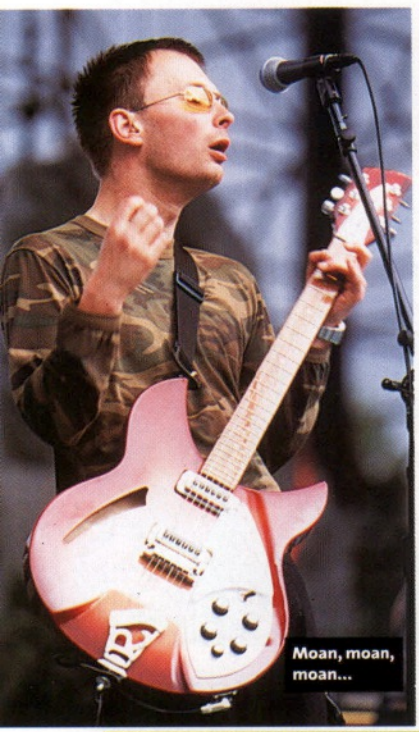


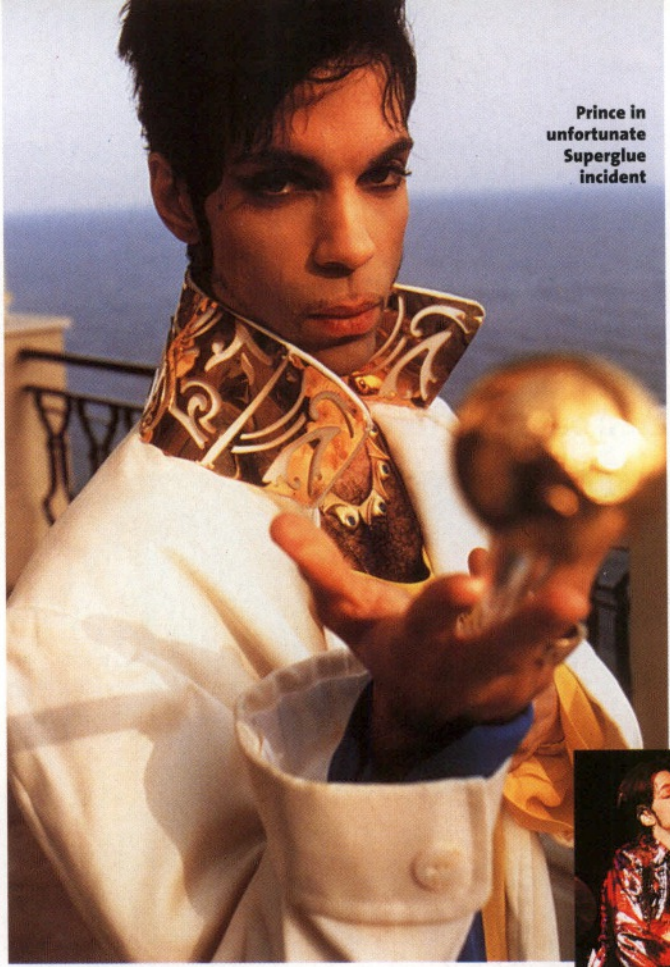
Cheer up - you're pop stars

RADIOHEAD

Radiohead are brilliant, but their lyrics are bizarre and not always decipherable. Is there anywhere I can get a complete list of them?
Just check out Green Plastic Radiohead at ***www.greenplastic.com***. One of the best fan sites you'll find, it has brilliant content and a complete lyrics list. Altogether now:
'When you've got to feel it in your bones.
Now I can't climb the stairs pieces missing everywhere prozac painkillers.' Quite.
Is there anywhere I can get an explanation of some of the lyrics and all the bizarre things I see on the CD covers?
Follow Me Around (***www.geocities.com/SunsetStrip/Stadium/7847/***) has submissions on various Radiohead curiosities. Meanwhile Radiohead (***www.angelfire.com/ ne/radiohead/***) is attempting to garner a collection of song interpretations. There aren't that many on the site at the moment, which is probably due to the fact that most of the lyrics make about as much sense as The Beatles' *I Am the Walrus*.
What's on the official site, then?
The official site, at ***www.radiohead.co.uk***, is full of pointless and truly bizarre drivel, but exceptionally entertaining drivel at that. It has undergone a couple of transformations over the years, but much of it is still waffle.
Doesn't sound like much use...
Ah, but all that's changing rapidly. They've already added an online store, and are now working on new areas such as a chat room and bulletin boards that the band are anxious to become involved with. And there may even be an online diary charting the creation of the new album. ▶

Sounds good, but where can I find out about the new album now?
Try Radiohead At Ease (***www.ateaseweb.com***), another phenomenally good site. Masses of stuff about the band – including an exceptional section on what might appear on the new album, which should be out early in 2000.
And multimedia?
Look no further than Planet Telex at ***underworld.net/radiohead/***.
Any other good sites?
All seem to delight in being as bizarre and eccentric as the official site. Try Injektilo ***www.users.globalnet.co.uk/~peers/***, and Another Radiohead Site at ***home.clara.net/wytrose/radiohead/radiohead.html***.


Moan, moan, moan...


Prince in unfortunate Superglue incident

PRINCE

(The Artist Formerly Known As)

Don't tell me the noted funk nutcase and *1999* hitmaker is into the Internet.
Just a bit. TAFKAP was so incensed by unofficial sites using his squiggle symbol without permission that he had 10 of them closed down last year in a flurry of lawsuits (see ***www.geocities.com/~tenthousand/*** for details). Following his protracted divorce from Warner Bros, he released his Crystal Ball CD via the Net – and when he popped into AOL for a chat, 300,000 people turned up.
What's on his official site, then?
The Warner site (***www.wbr.com/goldexperience***) is understandably a little on the sparse side, but Love 4 One Another (***www.love4one another.com***) is a pretty impressive multimedia extravaganza with a lush design, boasting exclusive audio and video clips, and the Artist's unique brand of homespun philosophy, of course.
Like what?
'In the future, everything will be in perpetual 4ward motion, as opposed to the time/space repeating loop we roll on now.'

TAFKAP was so incensed by unofficial sites he had 10 of them closed down

Hmm. Are there any unofficial sites still up and running?
A few. Try ***www.prince.org*** for a selection of news, FAQs and fan artwork, or the Dawnation site at ***www.geocities.com/SunsetStrip/9477/index.html***. Or there's always the online mag *Uptown* – the subject of one of those lawsuits – with a selection of thoughtful articles and stylish designs at ***www.uptown.se***.

What about the wacky stuff?
Much of that disappeared when the purple one purged the unofficial sites, but how about ***www.geocities.com/BourbonStreet/7192/ag2.html***, a tongue-in-cheek tribute to the more ridiculous instruments Prince has played down the years, including a squiggle-shaped guitar?
Actually, I've decided I don't like TAFKAP very much any more...
Join the club, then. Visit ***www.iniaccess.net.au/~nigs2/index.html*** for a collection of Prince-related parodies, an image gallery with his face blurred out and a 'What's the most ridiculous thing he's ever said?' competition with predictably hilarious results.

THE SUPERSTARS YOU'VE NEVER HEARD OF The Web's new generation of hitmakers

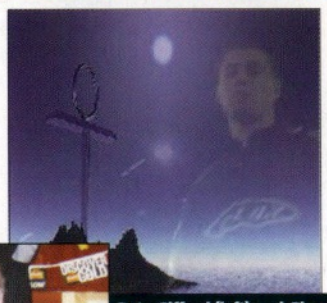
If Internet downloads translated into record sales, Mark Hlobil would be as famous in his native Las Vegas as Sinatra, and his face would be plastered across the front of *Rolling Stone* as frequently as Sheryl or Shania.

Instead Hlobil, who records trance and ambient tracks under the name Ghost In The Machine, scrapes by as a student and is famous only as a name on a Web site. Yet over 400,000 people have downloaded songs off his debut album *Liquid Dreams* from mp3.com, making him the number one Internet artist of the last three months.

Hlobil is part of a new breed of faceless superstars spawned by the success of sites such as mp3. Groups without record deals (or whose sales in real life have been pitiful) can suddenly find their way into millions of homes once a Web bandwagon starts rolling.

'The Internet is the equivalent of the worldwide word of mouth,' says Hlobil. 'The bottom line is, you can have the world as your audience. If I had to do this in a more conventional manner, it would've been a lot more difficult to get this level of publicity.'

Hlobil is now being courted by record companies, and has seen sales of his MP3-compatible CDs soar since his Net success.



Pete Gifford (left) and Ghost In The Machine: unlikely hits

Middlesbrough-based multi-instrumentalist Pete Gifford hasn't been quite so lucky. Though his download rate is approaching four figures, he admits he can count subsequent CD sales 'on two hands'. Gifford set up a site to promote his music six months ago, but didn't have the capacity to put tracks online, so he used mp3.com instead. 'I am a little disappointed with sales,' he admits. 'I get quite a lot of emails from people, but they don't say "Can I buy your CDs?" The main thing is to get your name known, though...'
www.mp3.com/listen.to/ghost machine
easyweb.easynet.co.uk/~gifford/pages/

www.music365.com

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Album Of The Week Specials

Record Search

Pre-Release Music Discounts

READ IT, SEE IT, HEAR IT

Going live

If you thought Live Aid was big, you ain't seen nothing yet. NetAid will rock the world...

Prepare yourself for the biggest live event the world has ever seen, as some of the best music acts on the planet collaborate for three mega concerts on 9 October – and you can see them all on the Internet.

Robbie Williams, Bono, George Michael and a host of other top names will take to the stage at NetAid, a trio of charity concerts in London, New Jersey and Geneva, that look set to attract the largest ever audience for a live music event. As well as TV and radio coverage of the concerts, the NetAid Web site (***www.netaid.org***) will stream complete live coverage.

The shows are intended to raise greater awareness of the NetAid foundation, a United Nations Development Programme project to eradicate the worst effects of the world's poverty by 2006. The five-hour concert at Wembley Stadium will kick off at 5pm, immediately followed by the New Jersey event. A shorter show in Geneva will overlap the two.

Harvey Goldsmith, one of the men behind the success of events such as LiveAid, a Tribute to Freddie Mercury and the Prince's Trust Rock Galas, is one of the producers involved with NetAid. He believes the project offers the most exciting list of acts for years. 'A lot of key acts have come on board,' he told *the net*. 'Many of the artists are already passionate about these issues, and this is an opportunity to address them. And the artists will do full sets, so fans will get the chance to see their favourite bands properly.'

The initiative for NetAid came from Cisco Systems; the company is underwriting the cost of the concert and providing one of the most powerful sites on the Web to back it up. The NetAid site has been designed to withstand one billion hits, and will be able to handle 125,000 simultaneous live streams, accommodating a viewing capacity of more than 10 million people over the duration of the concerts. This should ensure that NetAid is the largest live music event ever viewed on the Internet. The site will also stream live chats with the stars.

If you want to see the event live, tickets for the Wembley event cost £35 for unreserved seating, and £45 for reserved. See the Wembley Box Office (***www.wbo.co.uk***) or NetAid site for more details. A song recorded by Bono and Wyclef especially for the event, *New Day*, is released a month before the concert.

The NetAid site has been built to withstand a billion hits and 125,000 streams at once

netaid™

TONIGHT MATTHEW, I'M GONNA BE...

Those Net Aid stars in full:

BUSH
www.bushnet.com
British rock band named after Shepherd's Bush, who have enjoyed massive success in America.

THE CORRS
www.atlantic-records.com
The three lasses and a lad from Ireland who walked off with the Best International Band at this year's Brit Awards.

COUNTING CROWS
www.countingcrows.com
Perhaps best known for their smash hit single *Mr. Jones* from the brilliant *August And Everything After*. The new album *Recovering The Satellites* is out now.

CELINE DION
www.celineonline.com
Annoying big-nosed Canadian chanteuse best known for warbling the *Titanic* theme tune.

EURYTHMICS
www.peacetour.net
The first appearance in a long time for Annie Lennox and Dave Stewart, after they recently announced they were to reform.

JEWEL
www.jeweljk.com
The talented singer/songwriter, poet and actress who recently released her second album, *Spirit*.

WYCLEF JEAN AND BONO
www.wyclef.com
www.island.co.uk/u2
The frontmen for The Fugees and U2 respectively. The two have collaborated on the NetAid song, *New Day*, which will be released to promote the concert.

GEORGE MICHAEL
www.aegean.net
The man who used to be known as Georgios Kyriacos Panayiotou, and a veteran of Live Aid and the Tribute to Freddie Mercury.

JIMMY PAGE
jimmypage.triton.net
Legendary guitarist and Puff Daddy collabarator who, together with Robert Plant, formed the backbone of Led Zeppelin. Recognised as one of the best rock guitarists ever.

PETE TOWNSHEND
www.petetownshend.net
Best known as the windmilling guitarist for The Who, Townshend was also the chief lyricist of the band.

ROBBIE WILLIAMS
www.robbiewilliams.co.uk
Ex-Take Thatter and now extraordinarily successful solo artist. Expect plenty of backstage female interest.

Robbie Williams: let him entertain you

'Hurry up in the loo, George!'

PICTURES: LONDON FEATURES, KOBAL, RETNA, REX

WIN CDS FROM EVERY MAJOR NETAID ARTIST

If you like your music in more traditional formats as well as over the Internet, we've got a competition for you. We've teamed up with online music store Boxman (***www.boxman.co.uk***) to offer two lucky readers a CD from each of the 12 confirmed artists performing at Net Aid – that's Bush, The Corrs, Counting Crows, Celine Dion, the Eurythmics, Jewel, The Fugees, U2, George Michael, Jimmy Page, Pete Townshend and Robbie Williams.

If you fancy beefing up your CD collection, just tell us:
Which rock star was behind the original Live Aid concerts?
A) BOB GELDOF
B) BOB MOULD
C) BOB MORTIMER

Send your answer with your name and address to: **Net Aid Competition, the net, 38-42 Hampton Road, Teddington, Middlesex, TW11 0JE**, to arrive no later than October 1.
Rules are below right.

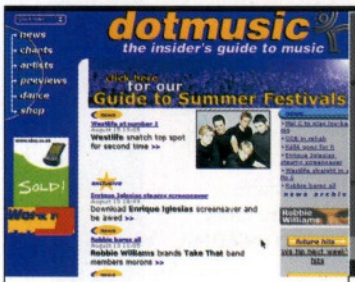
PRIZE WINNERS TO BE CHOSEN FROM ALL CORRECT ENTRIES RECEIVED BY SEPTEMBER 1. WINNERS WILL BE NOTIFIED WITHIN TWO WEEKS OF CLOSING DATE. EDITOR'S DECISION IS FINAL AND NO CORRESPONDENCE WILL BE ENTERED INTO. INFORMATION ON WINNERS AVAILABLE WITHIN 2 WEEKS OF CLOSING DATE AND WILL BE SUPPLIED ON RECEIPT OF STAMPED SAE.

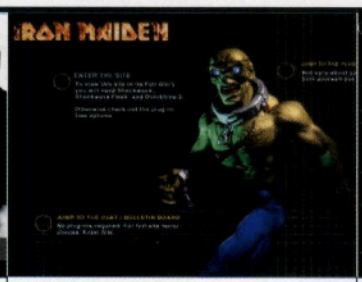
A LOT OF GOOD WORK FOR CHARIDEE

Apparently, one of Bob Geldof's biggest regrets about LiveAid was that, despite the event's huge success and the vast amount of money it raised for charity, the whole shebang was over in a matter of hours, with few significant long-term effects. The NetAid concert is designed less as a fund-raising event and more as a way of bringing attention to the NetAid cause. As well as raising money on the day, the Web site will contain information on how people can use their talent and expertise to help in the battle against world poverty. The idea is to create a number of support groups helping in different ways – the site will have five 'pillars', covering the areas of hunger, refugees, debt, environment and human rights. The first beneficiaries of the charity will be Kosovo refugees, and the Sudanese. Among the biggest aims of NetAid will be to ease the crushing poverty among third world countries and to address human rights abuses in the 40 per cent of countries who do not have democratically-elected governments.

Every music site

Whether you're after Beatles memorabilia, the hottest MP3 downloads or simply aspire to sing





News & Features

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www.addict.com
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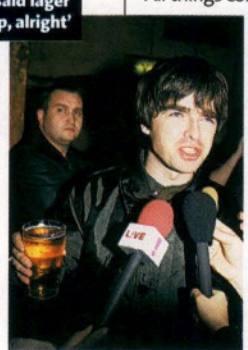
DOTMUSIC ***www.dotmusic.com***
It might look small, but keep digging – there's a wealth of info here, including dedicated areas for 50 of the biggest acts around.

LAUNCH ***www.launch.com***
If the eclectic or the undiscovered tickle your fancy, make Launch a bookmark. Spotlights on new artists and a wealth of downloads.

MUSIC365 ***www.music365.co.uk***
From those behind the Football, Cricket and Rugby sites of the same name comes a rich seam of news and info. Imagine *Melody Maker* without the print coming off.

ROLLING STONE
rollingstone.tunes.com
The online equivalent of one of the definitive voices of music has some duplicated copy, but there's plenty of unique material to make it an essential – see the database of artists.

SONICNET
www.sonicnet.com
A kitted-up music fan's dream come true, Sonicnet takes users on a multimedia journey through Real Audio clips, streaming radio and clips from the latest videos.


'I said lager top, alright'

ULTIMATE BAND LIST
www.ubl.com
Want a site for your favourite band? Then start here. UBL finds links for the artist of your choice, and reviews them too. There's more besides – news, merchandise and competitions.

Official sites Pop/Dance

BACKSTREET BOYS
www.backstreetboys.com
Hold on to your knickers, girls – the cheeky chappies hit the spot with their site. Video and news of all their charidee work.

BEASTIE BOYS
www.beastieboys.com
As deliberately obtuse and unspeakably cool as you'd expect. Why have a contents page, when you can have a control room?

Bring your daughter to the browser

DAVID BOWIE
www.davidbowie.com
The first major artist to embrace the Net with unique Web chats on his award-winning, personalised site.

JAMIROQUAI
www.jamiroquai.co.uk
Love him or loathe him, you can't avoid the Cat in the Hat. Check out the FAQ section: 'How did they make the *Virtual Insanity* video?'

PUBLIC ENEMY
www.publicenemy.com
All things considered, PE's site's nothing to write home about, but when Chuck D tells us to see something, we go see it.

TRICKY
www.trickyonline.com
West Country's finest miserabilist takes a Flash-heavy trip through his crazed world. Oodles here to enjoy, plus some disturbing haircuts.

UNDERWORLD
dirty.org
All the news and visuals you need; strangely, though, you can't buy lager, lager, lager yet...

Official sites Rock

BELLE & SEBASTIAN
www.myspace.co.uk/belleandsebastian/
Scottish low-fi superstars Belle & Sebastian write the stuff on their site. Also, try ***www.belleandsebastian.co.uk.***

BLUR
www.blur.co.uk
The cheeky cockneys offer a wide range of song snippets and videos. Top marks for the unofficial site links.

IRON MAIDEN
www.ironmaiden.co.uk
What an official site should be: huge, expensive graphics, diaries from the band and a megastore with needlessly expensive merchandise.

MANIC STREET PREACHERS
www.manics.co.uk
News, tour details and profiles from the Welsh wonders – plus a few of those not-at-all-pretentious quotations.

OASIS
www.oasisinet.com/
When Bonehead rocked the world with his defection, you heard it here first. Far from perfect, but worth a look.

Mad on her Web site

REM
www.remhq.com
'REM are proud to be the last group in the known world to have a Web page. We've worked very hard to achieve this goal.' And it's not bad...

THE ROLLING STONES
www.the-rolling-stones.com
Guess the Stones riff, build the Bridge To Babylon or play Rolling Stones Hangman. Fun, fun, fun.

Fan Sites

THE BEATLES
members.tripod.com/~taz4158/pepper.html
A real treasure trove of hard-to-find or never-seen-before interviews, audio and memorabilia – astonishing.

'Look Macca, we're on the Internet'

BOYZONE
www.geocities.com/Broadway/Balcony/3809/
Amazing archive of the Irish idols, compiled by a 15-year-old fan. Offers everything you could ever want.

CHEMICAL BROTHERS
www.musicfanclubs.org/chemical/
Worthy of inclusion for the nifty Sound Studio, which lets you mix Chem tracks on virtual decks.

GARBAGE
www.garbage.net
Ignore the tacky intro visuals and head for the sounds files to find every Garbage song ever.

MADONNA
www.madonnanet.com
Every Madonna site out there worth seeing is collected and categorised under one roof.

NIRVANA
geo.xtrema.com/ace56/
Best of the Nirvana sites out there. The media clips are a delight, and a Name That Tune contest rocks.

SPICE GIRLS
superspice.hypermart.net
Take the test and discover which Spice Girl you're most like, or read some of the hilariously naff stories Spice fans have sent in.

PICTURES: RETNA

you'll ever need

like Alanis, our guide to the best music sites around will have you rocking at your desktop

Fun

ARCHIVE OF MISHEARD LYRICS
www.kissthisguy.com
Thought John Lennon was singing about 'Lucy in disguise with lions'? Go to this page, named after the most famous misheard lyric of all.

THE BLACK SABBATH GAME
www.ultranet.com/~geezer/black_sabbath_game.html
Black Sabbath version of the Kevin Bacon game where everyone links to everyone else in six easy steps – including New Kids on the Block.

EASY AIR GUITAR
mirrorimage.com/air/
The fictitious R 'Bud' Philson teaches kids how to play air guitar, with a series of ludicrous pictures.

ALANIS MORISSETTE LYRIC GENERATOR
www.brunching.com/toys/toy-alanislyrics.html
Absolute genius – enter some things you hate, a colour and the name of an ex-partner and the Lyric Generator will make up an Alanis lyric to suit you.

MR T VS HANSON
www.mrtgalaxy.simplenet.com/thanson.htm
What happens when the *A-Team* hard man meets pop's whiniest brats? Here's a clue: Hanson don't end up looking quite so cute...

Aqua: always a laugh

SLAP A SPICE GIRL
www.dapple.demon.co.uk/spice/games/slapspice.html
This great Shockwave game is back. Enjoy the satisfaction of smacking Posh all over again.

WEIRD BAND NAMES
home.earthlink.net/~chellec/
Band names that wannabes have seen fit to trade under, such as Once I Killed A Gopher With A Stick.

Live Concerts

Playalonga Jarvis

BROADCAST
www.broadcast.com/music/concerts
Comprehensive guide to live sounds on the Net, with daily listings. Also features listening parties – where new albums are premiered exclusively.

JAM TV *www.jamtv.com*
All manner of Webcasts, including some exclusives, plus news and photos and a chat section in association with *Rolling Stone*.

LIVE CONCERTS *www.liveconcerts.com*
As URLs go, this one does exactly what it says on the tin, with live concert broadcasts and an archive of in-studio sessions – some real gems.

LIVE ONLINE *www.live-online.com*
All manner of live events are pulled together on this natty little portal, Plus, Digital Jukebox plays exclusive new tracks and previews, while Modem Moshpit offers interviews.

LIVE ON THE NET
www.liveonthenet.com
Not just music (though there's plenty of it here, with audio and video clips) but sport, chat and Webcams, too.

MTV *www.mtv.com*
Just as annoyingly entertaining as the channel that spawned it, MTV archives some great shows, as well as specialist band areas.

VIRTUE TV
www.virtuetv.com/music
The Brits have got in on the act, too – Virtue TV is a little-known London-based station that does a sterling job of bringing the capital's best concerts to the Net, alongside regular audio and video shows.

MP3

2LOOK4 *www.2look4.com*
Very useable search engine for finding MP3 files. More content is promised but, in the meantime, enjoy other users' 'last 20 queries'.

CDDB *www.cddb.com*
Every time you download an audio file from certain sites or buy a CD over the Net, it's registered here. See the most popular downloads and there's lowdown on CD players.

LYCOS
mp3.lycos.com
Claims to be the largest MP3 search engine in the world and, as it's powered by Lycos, there's no reason to dispute that. Over 500,000 songs offered.

MP3 *www.mp3.com*
This started the whole thing off and boasts more titles than anyone else, with profiles, links and friendly software and hardware guides.

MP3 2000 *www.mp3-2000.com*
While there are search facilities and band areas here, this is slightly more technically-minded than most of its rivals. Plenty on the future of MP3.

MP3 BOX *mp3.box.sk*
A useful alternative MP3 portal for those who find other sites less than objective; the legal search engine delivers the goods. Good technical info.

MP3 NOW
mp3now.com
Given that MP3 is, apparently, more popular on the Net than sex (quite a claim), it deserves a decent Yahoo!-style portal. And this is it.

Be king of the Hill at The Source

Best Of The Rest

BLUE HIGHWAY
www.thebluehighway.com
If you've lost your woman or just fancy the sound of twanging guitars and miserable warbling, go here.

CLASSICAL NET *www.classical.net*
More for the newcomer than the classical aficionado, Classical Net acts as a quite brilliant introduction to a daunting genre.

COUNTRY NOW *www.countrynow.com*
Saddle up for a daily news service aimed square at the select few who dare call themselves country fans. Great links to real, old-time country stations.

JAZZ REVIEW *www.jazzreview.com*
Cool, laid-back home page for jazz cats. Wealth of information here and a daily jazz compilation, powered by Real Audio. Nice.

METAL SCENE
www.metalscene.com
Grrr. If you like your sites as black as your music, you'll love this. Proof that tight leather trousers and poodle perms didn't die when Slash retired.

R & B PAGE
www.rbpage.com
Focuses less on newer artists than old favourites, but merits a mention for innovative use of Real Audio.

THE SOURCE
thesource.tunes.com
From rap mag *The Source* comes a site at least as good as the print version.

CAFÉ SOCIETY

Thanks to cybercafés, you can instantly mail the folks back home from the most unlikely places. Our world tour runs clockwise on these pages

1 ALASKA FAIRNET

WHERE ON EARTH? 1512 Cowles Street, Fairbanks, Alaska, USA.
EMAIL *fyfnet@uaf.edu*
WEB *www.fairnet.org*
GETTING THERE Located near Lathrop High School. Bus: from Fairbanks International airport take the 'Blue Line' to Airport and Barnett, library half a block north.
HOW MUCH? Free
YOU SHOULD KNOW It's more a library than a true cybercafé.
VISIT BEFORE YOU GO *www.fairnet.org*

2 CALIFORNIA

JEREMY'S CYBERCAFÉ & BEER HAUS

WHERE ON EARTH? 61597 29 Palms Highway, Joshua Tree, California, USA.
EMAIL *jeremy@joshua-tree.com*
WEB *joshua-tree.com*
GETTING THERE Located near the Joshua Tree National Park. Bus: local from Palm Springs; ask for Joshua Tree National Park. The café is next door to Joshua Tree's bank (which is easy to find, as there's only one).
NEAREST CITY Palm Springs is half an hour away; LA is a two-and-a-half hour journey.
HOW MUCH? $7.80 (£4.90) per hour.
BEFORE YOU GO *joshua-tree.com*

3 SENEGAL FUTURIX

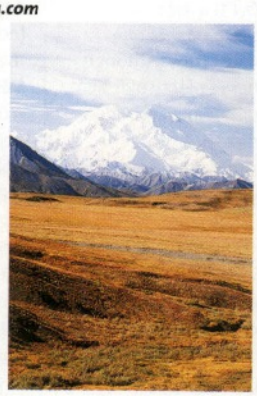
WHERE ON EARTH? Centre Commercial Plein Sud, Saly Portudal, Mbour, Senegal.
EMAIL *futurix@metissacana.sn*
WEB No site as yet.
GETTING THERE 80km from Dakar. The nearest town (if you can call it a town) is Mbour, which is only 5km away.
HOW MUCH? 3000 CFA francs (£3.10) per hour (1 hour minimum).
BEFORE YOU GO *www.primature.sn* (in French with good pictures) and *www.hotelstravel.com/senegal.html*

14 ARUBA

CAFÉ INTERNET AKA CYBERCAFÉ
WHERE ON EARTH? Suite 204, Royal Plaza Mall, L G Smith Blvd, Oranjestad, Aruba.
EMAIL *bizopp@cybercafe.aw*
WEB *www.cybercafe.aw* and *www.arubadigitalcity.com*
GETTING THERE Opposite the cruise terminal in downtown Oranjestad.
HOW MUCH? US$11.50 (£7.25) per hour.
YOU SHOULD KNOW Upcoming Caribbean resort. Good infrastructure, friendly people.
BEFORE YOU GO
See it to believe it: *www.arubadigitalcity.com*

13 CHILE LA TORRE SUIZA

WHERE ON EARTH? 969 Fco. Bilbao, Villarrica, Chile.
EMAIL *info@torresuiza.com*
WEB *www.torresuiza.com*
GETTING THERE



No buses in the city, but the café is three blocks from the main bus terminal, with daily buses from all the major cities of central Chile – Santiago, Concepcion, Temuco, Valdivia, Osorno and Pto. Montt. Nearest intersection is Pedro de Valdivia. Nearest city: Temuco, 90km away with 200,000 population. Villarrica itself has 25,000 pop.
HOW MUCH? 3000 pesos (£3.70) per hour.
BEFORE YOU GO
The Villarrica site is at *www.villarricanet.com*

12 FALKLAND ISLANDS

HARD DISK CAFÉ
WHERE ON EARTH? Fitzroy Road, Port Stanley.
EMAIL *hard.disk@horizon.co.fk*
GETTING THERE By plane to the islands. Celebrate your arrival with a cup of instant coffee.
HOW MUCH? £10 per hour.
BEFORE YOU GO Try the good Falklands site at *www.fidc.org.fk*

WORDS: KATH STANTON

4 TANZANIA CYBERNET

WHERE ON EARTH? India Street, Arusha.
EMAIL *guest@cybernet.co.tz* and *guest1@cybernet.co.tz*
WEB *www.twiga.com*
GETTING THERE Located near the Clock Tower, which is the exact mid-point between Cape Town and Cairo. Nearest city is the capital, Dar-es-Salaam, some 650km away.
HOW MUCH? 3600 Tanzanian shillings (£2.90) per hour.
BEFORE YOU GO CyberSpot Internet café at *cyberspot.co.tz*

5 CHINA MARK'S INTERNET CENTER

WHERE ON EARTH? 19 Guangming Road, Urumqi, Xinjiang, China 830002.
EMAIL *markinfo@xj.cninfo.net*
WEB *www.markguide.com*
GETTING THERE Buses 1, 17, 7, 101, 902 – ask for Xidaqiao stop.
HOW MUCH? 10 Yuan RMB (80p) per hour.
YOU SHOULD KNOW The owners sleep in the café and say they keep it open 24 hours a day. They suggest you knock at the door if they are closed. They also have a travel business.
BEFORE YOU GO *www.markguide.com*

6 NEPAL EASYLINK CYBER CAFÉ

WHERE ON EARTH? Thamel PO Box 5273, Kathmandu, Bagmati Zone, Nepal.
EMAIL *easylink@visitnepal.com*
WEB *www.visitnepal.com/easylink/*
GETTING THERE Hotel Vaisali, buses 23, 10.
HOW MUCH? 240 rupees (£2.20) per hour.
YOU SHOULD KNOW EasyLink was the first Internet café to open in Nepal.
BEFORE YOU GO *www.visitnepal.com*

7 RUSSIA VYATKA INTERCOM

WHERE ON EARTH? 67 Svobody Street, Kirov, Russia 610000.
EMAIL *webmaster@inetcafe.vyatka.ru*
WEB *www.inetcafe.vyatka.ru*
GETTING THERE Near the Central Hotel.
HOW MUCH? 20 roubles (50p) per hour.
YOU SHOULD KNOW Like an office: no games, no porno. Used for business and chat.
BEFORE YOU GO *www.toned.ru*

11 BAHRAIN

THE IDEA GALLERY

WHERE ON EARTH? 1057 Road 3831, Adliya, Bahrain.
EMAIL *ideagal@ideagal.com*
WEB *www.ideagal.com*

GETTING THERE Manama's the nearest city, from where – for just 50 fils (10p) – you can catch the number 6 bus to the café, located near the Palace Inn Hotel.
HOW MUCH? 2 dinars (£3.30) per hour.
YOU SHOULD KNOW Open 10am-midnight.
BEFORE YOU GO *www.batelco.com.bh*

9 THAILAND

HILLTRIBE-INTERNET-CYBER-KITCHEN

WHERE ON EARTH? 360 Moo 3, SOI 1, Ban Pasang, Mae Chan 57110, Chiang Rai.
EMAIL *cyberkitchen@gmx.net*
WEB *welcome.to/chiangmai+chiangrai/*
GETTING THERE Behind the Esso Sation in Pasang Village, the Golden Triangle.
HOW MUCH? £2 per hour.
YOU SHOULD KNOW Open 24 hours.
BEFORE YOU GO *welcome.to/chiangmai/*

10 NEW ZEALAND

COROMANDEL CYBERPLACE

WHERE ON EARTH? 390 Pagitt Street, Coromandel 2851, New Zealand.
EMAIL *Coromandelcyberplace@yahoo.com*
WEB *members.tripod.com/Coromandelcyberplace/Coromandelcyberplace.html*
GETTING THERE Auckland ferry timetable: *www.hauraki.com/pakatoa/timetable.html*
HOW MUCH? NZ$12 (£4) per hour.
YOU SHOULD KNOW They don't sell drinks.
BEFORE YOU GO *www.thepeninsula.co.nz*

8 FIJI

THE REPUBLIC OF CAPPUCCINO

WHERE ON EARTH? Corner Loftus Street and Victoria Parade, Suva, Fiji Islands.
EMAIL *jp@internetfiji.com*
GETTING THERE In the main street of downtown Suva city (pop. 200,000).
HOW MUCH? F$13.20 (£4.25) per hour.
YOU SHOULD KNOW Run by a 'coffee fanatic'.
BEFORE YOU GO *www.internetfiji.com*

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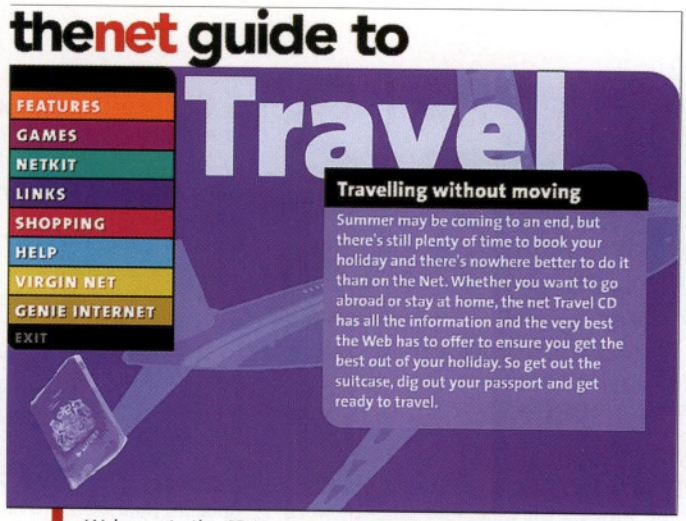

thenet guide to
Travel
FEATURES
GAMES
NETKIT
LINKS
SHOPPING
HELP
VIRGIN NET
GENIE INTERNET
EXIT
Travelling without moving
Summer may be coming to an end, but there's still plenty of time to book your holiday and there's nowhere better to do it than on the Net. Whether you want to go abroad or stay at home, the net Travel CD has all the information and the very best the Web has to offer to ensure you get the best out of your holiday. So get out the suitcase, dig out your passport and get ready to travel.

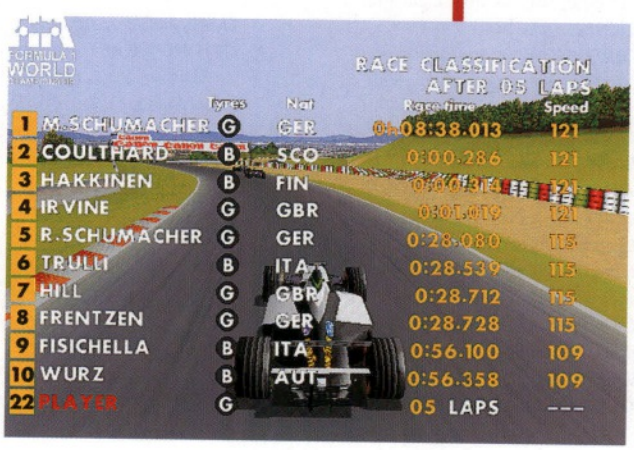
Welcome to the CD. You can navigate your way around all our stunning content from the front page of the disc

SHOPPING The best places to spend money online

HELP Having trouble using the CD? Then just click on the help section for advice

Whatever your online travel requirements, we have links to the best sites on the Web

SOFTWARE You can install all your essential Internet software from the CD. You can install the best Web browsers, add-ons for your browser and software for viewing multimedia content


RACE CLASSIFICATION
AFTER 05 LAPS
Tyres
Nat
Race time
Speed
1 M.SCHUMACHER G GER 0h08:38.013 121
2 COULTHARD B SCO 0:00.286 121
3 HAKKINEN B FIN 121
4 IR VINE G GBR 0:01.019 121
5 R.SCHUMACHER G GER 0:28.080 115
6 TRULLI B ITA 0:28.539 115
7 HILL G GBR 0:28.712 115
8 FRENTZEN G GER 0:28.728 115
9 FISICHELLA B ITA 0:56.100 109
10 WURZ B AUT 0:56.358 109
22 PLAYER G 05 LAPS ---

Enjoy this superb demo from Official Formula 1 Racing, as you take the place of your favourite driver in the Japanese Grand Prix. Will your driving skills see you outpace Coulthard, Hakkinen and Schumacher, or will you be fighting it out with the back-markers?

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Put yourself in the picture with our Cinema channel where you can check out what's worth seeing and where you can see it from a choice of over 640 UK cinemas. Tune in to our Music channel for the latest news and reviews on CD releases and gigs from Blondie to B*Witched. And if you see a concert that takes your fancy on our gig guide, you can book your ticket online with Virgin Net.

www.virgin.net

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Genie Internet is an ISP with a difference. It gives you everything an ordinary ISP does, like e-mail, web space and news and information on topics from finance to sport. But Genie Internet also gets the information that matters to you delivered to your mobile phone.

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With Genie Internet's free 'Message Mail' service you can receive short e-mail messages directly on your mobile phone as text messages.

Interested? Good, because there's much, much more to Genie Internet, and by loading the software on the attached freebie CD you can get Internet magic on your mobile today. *The user is responsible for local telephone charges to connect to the Internet. G-Live Football sends headlines to your phone for free – voice reports are charged at 39p per minute. Prices are BT Cellnet RRP inc. VAT.

Chris Hadley swaps the twitch of a nose for the click of a mouse and blows £500 on the Internet auction circuit

Sold!

Picture the scene. 'Nine hundred and ninety-nine thousand pounds!' cries the auctioneer, motioning towards the back of the room. He leans towards a blue-rinsed old lady in the front row. 'You know what the next bid is, don't you madam?' he asks. Almost imperceptibly, she nods. 'One million pounds!' bellows the auctioneer... Ahhh, the thrill of the auction room; watching other people compete to spend large sums of their money on old furniture is truly exhilarating. How much more fun must it be to join the bidding?

The good news is you don't need a spare million quid to sample the delights of Internet auctions. Auction sites are the Web's new boom industry, and with some small change in your back pocket you can bid on a diverse range of goodies at sites such as eBay, E-swap, eBid and QXL. A better-known name is set to join these ranks soon with Sotheby's preparing to go online in partnership with Amazon.com later this year.

But how easy is it to navigate the world of electronic multi-coloured swap shops? Armed with £500 and a blank shopping list, *the net* aimed to find out. And, as we quickly discovered, it really is amzing what they'll sell you online these days...

PHOTOGRAPHY: STEVE ORINO

Hornsey Auctions Ltd
275
(0181) 340 5334
SONY
Digital MEGA BASS MZ-R55
MD WALKMAN
MODE
DISPLAY
OVER
REC
END SEARCH
EDIT/ENTER
CHARGE

1932 Gillette Razor Set in box

WHERE: eBay
www.ebay.co.uk
BOUGHT FOR: £28.34 (£12.34 item, £8 postage, £8 for International Money Order)
HIGH STREET PRICE: £30 (source: Abbey Antiques, London)
SAVING: £1.66
HASSLE FACTOR: ★★★★

This looks beautiful in the photo. It's the kind of item that's on those '50 things you should own by the time you're 25' lists.

I began by searching for 'razor' using the eBay engine: this item came top of the list with only 10 minutes to go before the end of the auction – and fortunately there was just one other person bidding. Cunningly, I waited until one minute before the auction closed and slammed in a winning bid, therefore leaving almost no time for the other bidder to be notified. Ha.

Abbey Antiques in London was most impressed with the buy, saying that the price was a bargain. The downside was the shipping charges and the commission on the International Money Order – the only payment method the seller would accept. Both pushed the price up to about the same as I would have had to pay in a UK antiques shop.

But who cares? It's still a fantastic bargain... isn't it?

'I waited until one minute before the end of the auction and slammed in a winning bid'

New 3.75 inch Darth Maul Action Figure

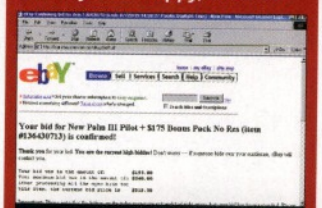
WHERE: Auction Universe
www.auctionuniverse.co.uk
BOUGHT FOR: £15 (including postage)
HIGH STREET PRICE: Not yet available in UK
HASSLE FACTOR: ★★

It's impossible to visit an online auction in August 1999 without bidding for a *Star Wars Phantom Menace* action figure, and Darth Maul is the obvious choice. I'd already bid on two other action figures at different sites, but the reserves were way too high. Defeated, I directed my browser to Auction Universe, where, in the wise words of Yoda: 'Darth Mauls, two of there were, mmm!' I chose this tiny three-and-a-bit-inch figure which sells in the US for just $9.99, but, according to the UK-based seller and Hamleys, is unavailable in the UK. US stores appear to be low on stocks and eToys, one of the big Internet toy shops stocking the figure, won't ship to the UK. It took me three bids to match the reserve price on this one, and it's easy to get carried away when you're intent on beating off the opposition. At least the £15 covers postage as well.

We needed a light sabre to repel hostile bids

HOW TO BID ONLINE

You've seen the incredible bargains we've landed and you want to place a bid for yourself? It's easy, and here's how. All the various auction sites work in much the same way. Once you've registered and found something you want to bid for, check out the lowest bid you can make – this is either the opening bid set by the seller or a bid higher than the current highest bid. If you have any questions for the seller you can click a link to send an email before you start spending your money. Also, don't forget to check the seller's rating by clicking on the numbers or symbols next to his or her user name – this is how other buyers warn you that you're dealing with the Web's own Arthur Daley. When you're happy, scroll to the bid form on the item page. Most sites have automated bidding, so you can enter the highest bid you're prepared to make and the site will bid for you if and when you're outbid. Don't worry, it will keep your maximum bid a secret unless it's needed. Once your bid is accepted you will receive an email confirming it and telling you if you've met the reserve price – this is the secret minimum price the seller is prepared to sell at. If you've met the reserve, make a note of when the auction ends and sit back and wait. You will be notified by email if you are outbid and given the opportunity to try again.



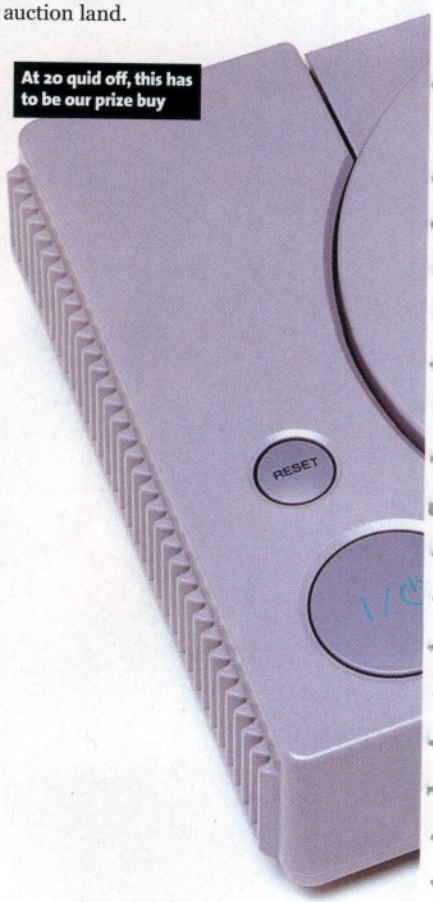
Just one of the many pulse-raising moments in the bid for a Palm III

New Sony Playstation + Dualshock

WHERE: Yahoo Auctions
uk.auctions.yahoo.com/uk/
BOUGHT FOR: £77.41
HIGH STREET PRICE: £99.99 (source: Sony)
SAVING: £22.58
HASSLE FACTOR: ★★★

Online auctions are just the job when it comes to bagging big boy's toys. This is a brand spanking new, factory-wrapped Playstation: the significant saving comes from the difference between the US and the UK High Street prices. Yahoo had bundles of Playstations on offer. I placed a $75 maximum bid and emailed the seller Pat to ask if any games came with it. In no time at all he got back to me and kindly cheated by revealing the secret reserve price of $109. Naturally I then bid this amount and won the auction.

It later transpired that Pat worked for a shop called Games Doctors in Omaha, Ohio. Upon ringing to give them my credit card details someone in the background could be heard exclaiming: 'Wow! Not another one, this is great!' Evidently business is booming for the Games Doctors and many other such businesses in online auction land.



At 20 quid off, this has to be our prize buy

New Collection of Four Highland Soaps

WHERE: E-Swap
www.eswap.co.uk
BOUGHT FOR: £5.95 (£4.95 item, £1 postage)
HIGH STREET PRICE: Unknown
HASSLE FACTOR: ★★

Sitting for hours in front of a computer screen addicted to auction sites and the buzz of bidding can be a sweaty business during the height of summer. I was pondering this unhappy state of affairs while plumbing the nether regions of E-Swap's categories when I chanced upon this poetic description: 'A collection of four personal soaps made from rare and local fragrances found only on the Highland moors and mountains. Nicely packaged, it will make an ideal gift.' I could already smell the heather in my armpits. The shear audacity of the seller compelled me to make the bid as I dreamed of long soaks in the tub with my aromatic Highland soap.

10x8 Signed Photo of Fiona Fullerton

WHERE: E-Swap
www.eswap.co.uk
BOUGHT FOR: £6.00 (£5.00 item, £1 postage)
HIGH STREET PRICE: £30 (source: The Cinema Store, London)
SAVING: £24
HASSLE FACTOR: ★★

Memorabilia sales are a real growth area on the Net and I was determined to invest in one. It came down to a choice between signed photos of Bucks Fizz, Alvin Stardust or the former Bond girl Fiona Fullerton in glorious black and white. No one else was bidding for any of them and the auctions were due to close in minutes. It was a hard choice. I'd had no idea how much Fullerton-abilia was worth when bidding for my piccy, but the nice man at Soho's Cinema Store believes I got a good deal.

New Diamond 56K V.90 Internal Modem

WHERE: E-Swap
www.eswap.co.uk
BOUGHT FOR: £36 (£34 item, £2 postage)
HIGH STREET PRICE: £41.13 (source: Simply Computers)
SAVING: £5.13
HASSLE FACTOR: ★★★★

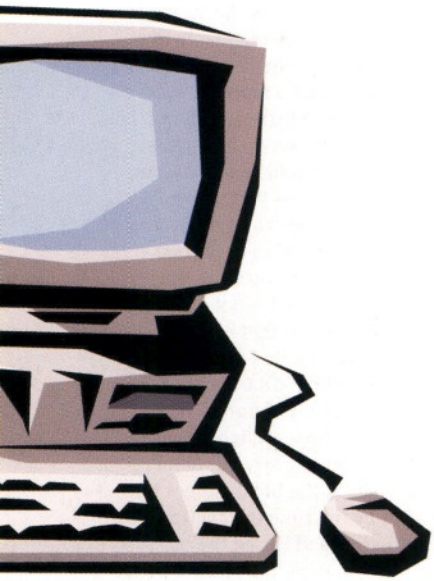
The prices of computer bits and pieces are plummeting so rapidly that at online auctions it's hard to beat the bargains readily available in newspapers and High Street stores. It's therefore worth searching around: I visited six other sites first. On most you are able to type in a search term to locate a specific item, or browse through the various categories. Some allow you to search for popular items with five or more bids, or for auctions that are about to close. I began by placing a bid at QXL, only to discover that frustratingly the auction had closed while I was bidding. So it was back to E-Swap where I discovered this modem, which I'd already priced at Simply. There was no reserve on it, but the opening price had been set at £34, so that's what I bid. A few hours later I was the proud winner of the booty.

Second-hand Traditional Converse All-Stars

WHERE: Yahoo Auctions
uk.auctions.yahoo.com/uk/
BOUGHT FOR: £10.17 (£3.39 item, £6.78 postage)
HIGH STREET PRICE: £24.99 new (source: Ace Sports & Leisure, London)
SAVING: £14.82
HASSLE FACTOR: ★★★★

Only too aware of the strange life-forms evolving inside my own trainers, the idea of wearing someone else's footwear was more than a little disturbing, but I just had to have these classic shoes. The item page had four or five pictures taken from different angles and the trainers appeared to be in very good condition. The opening bid was a mere 25c, but – not surprisingly – there wasn't much action. So I waded in with a killer bid of $8.00 to guarantee my victory. This wasn't placed straight away as the automatic system simply increased the bid in stages to $1. But by the time the auction had closed it had raised the bid to $5.50 to meet the reserve price, and the shoes were mine.

After three days had passed with no word I assumed the seller had decided to hang onto her trusty old shoes after all. Although there is a legally binding contract between buyer and seller at the end of an auction, in reality there's little to stop either party backing out of the deal. But she finally got in touch and I agreed to pay by sending cash in a plain envelope – potentially impoundable by US customs and extremely dodgy. We don't recommend this method, but it was the only economic way on something costing only £3.39. Worse still, the postage is surface mail, which means my new old shoes should land on my doormat in something like six weeks' time.



Part department store

Part computer fair

Part car boot sale

Always fun

Auction your stuff online for FREE!
QXL: the UK's largest online auction
for new and used gear.

qxl

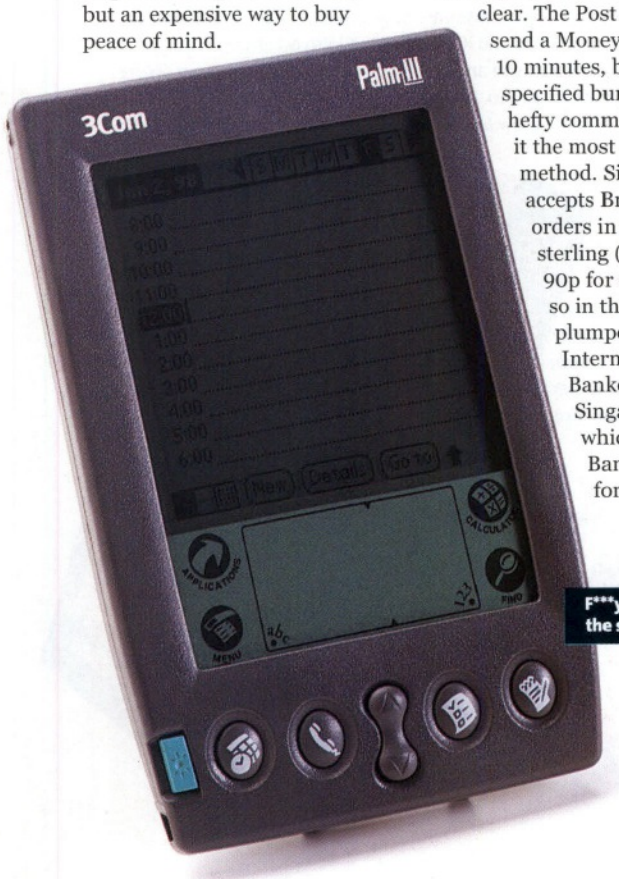
www.qxl.com

Second Hand Palm Pilot III Series

WHERE: eBay
www.ebay.co.uk
BOUGHT FOR: £172.83 (£143.24 item, £19.81 postage, £9.78 iescrow.com commission)
HIGH STREET PRICE: £179.99 new (source: 3Com)
SAVING: £7.16
HASSLE FACTOR: ★★★★★

The final saving on this cool, award-winning Palm Pilot was paltry, thanks to a mischievous Net-user called 'f***you' and the high commission charged by iescrow. I bid on a Palm Pilot at E-Swap only to be outbid at the last minute by 'f***you'. His – and I'm sure it must be a him – bid was so ridiculously large it took the bidding galaxies over the High Street price. So I turned to eBay where, after a nail-biting two days, I won the auction with a bid that made a decent saving on UK prices.

Shortly after winning I had an email from the seller at E-Swap offering me the Palm for about £20 less – because 'f***you' had sabotaged the auction for laughs. In the spirit of online auctions I had to honour my eBay bid. I paid through their escrow service, iescrow, which holds onto the money until I've inspected the goods – useful, but an expensive way to buy peace of mind.



F***you's bids raised the stake for a Palm

New Sony Minidisc MZR55

WHERE: Yahoo Auctions
uk.auctions.yahoo.com/uk/
BOUGHT FOR: £198 (£176.40 item, £11.72 postage, £10 for International Bankers Draft)
HIGH STREET PRICE: £249.99 (source: Sony)
SAVING: £51.99
HASSLE FACTOR: ★★★★★

This brand-new Minidisc was being offered by an Alson Chee in Singapore, who must possess a lot of them if the number of auctions he's running is anything to go by. Most of the bidders in the auction were from the US, so I had the advantage of being able to bid high, such is the difference in High Street prices between the States and here. With an hour left before close, a cheeky email told me that I'd been outbid. I quickly placed an unbeatable bid, revelling in the thrill of the chase. Alson was soon in touch, reminiscing about a holiday in London. The Minidisc was mine.

Payment was less easy. It's impossible to get a Money Order in Singapore dollars and a personal cheque in pounds sterling (on which commission is charged) takes a few weeks to clear. The Post Office can send a Moneygram within 10 minutes, but only to a specified bureau but hefty commission makes it the most expensive method. Singapore accepts British postal orders in pounds sterling (which cost 90p for every £20), so in the end I plumped for an International Bankers Draft in Singapore dollars which Lloyds Bank provided for £10.

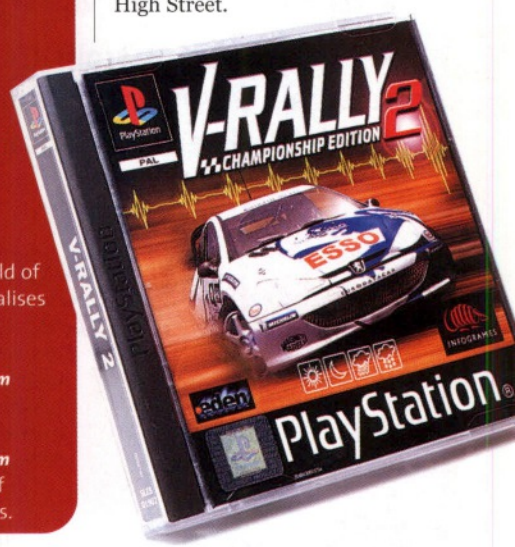
WHERE TO BID

uk.auctions.yahoo.com/uk/
Well-known name but mostly US-based sellers.
www.ebay.co.uk
Biggest and best; special measures to protect buyers.
www.qxl.com
Europe's largest; person-to-person bids and QXL's own.
www.eswap.co.uk
UK-specific with lots of merchandise categories.
www.ebid.co.uk
UK-specific; lots of categories but not much for sale.
www.amazon.com
The book behemoth has muscled in.
www.bullnet.co.uk/auctions/
UK site specialising in more unusual lots.
www.auctionuniverse.co.uk
Has the edge on E-swap as best UK specific site.
www.lastminute.com
The last-minute UK specialist; excellent bargains to be had
www.firstauction.com
Like QXL, has its own, as well as personal, lots.
www.classifieds2000.com/cgi cls/display.exe?Excite+na_AuctionIntro
Massive selection of person--to-person sales
auctions.xoom.com
Xoom's large and professional new site.
www.icollector.com
Edging closer to the world of Sotheby's, this site specialises in art, antiques and collectibles.
www.theauctionchannel.com
Bid live at UK auctions televised over the Web.
www.internetauctionlist.com
Comprehensive listing of specialist online auctions.

Second-hand V-Rally Playstation Game

WHERE: eBid
www.ebid.co.uk
BOUGHT FOR: £8.50 (£7.50 item, £1 postage)
HIGH STREET PRICE: £18.99 (source: Helston Leisure, Cornwall)
SAVING: £10.49
HASSLE FACTOR: ★★

I had to shop around a bit to find a decent Playstation game: while there were plenty on offer at all the auction sites, most were museum pieces, and opening bids were, frankly, silly. eBid itself can be disappointing: although it's a big, professional site, there doesn't seem to be a huge amount for sale, and as a result it doesn't attract the traffic of sites such as eBay. On this occasion, however, it came up trumps. This was the only Playstation game for sale at the site, but it was one worth having and I landed it unopposed (the upside of small traffic) at a price considerably less than on the High Street.



THE VERDICT

Net auctions are closer to the world of Trotter's Independent Traders than they are to Sotheby's. Bargains there are, but many of them can be accounted for by the substantial difference in High Street prices between the UK and... well, just about everywhere else in the world. Once you've paid postage, organised payment and counted the cost of your time online, you might find the saving isn't worth the hassle. Internet auctions are lots of fun but keep your wits about you and your credit card as distant as possible.

THE EXPERT SAYS

Sotheby's director Jackie Coulter is now preparing for the launch of Sothebys.com, in partnership with Amazon.com. She predicts that leading online auctions such as eBay will soon move more upmarket, shifting emphasis to antiques and memorabilia. When they do, they will need to adopt the practices of the more traditional institutions. 'Ultimately the consumer will have to be protected,' she says. 'Regulations will have to be put in place, because they simply cannot go on in an unregulated way.'

Shirts £42

Didn't like last month's Hawaiian offering? Don't say we don't cater for all tastes. Our search for some classic menswear took us to the Charles Tyrwhitt site where you can shop by shirt colour. The Kensington and Prince of Wales cost £42 each, plus £4 for delivery (allow 10 days). ***www.ctshirts.co.uk***

Retail therapy

The Net's shopping trolley is bulging once again this month. Shame they won't let us keep that scooter, though

Area 51 Aprilia scooter £1974

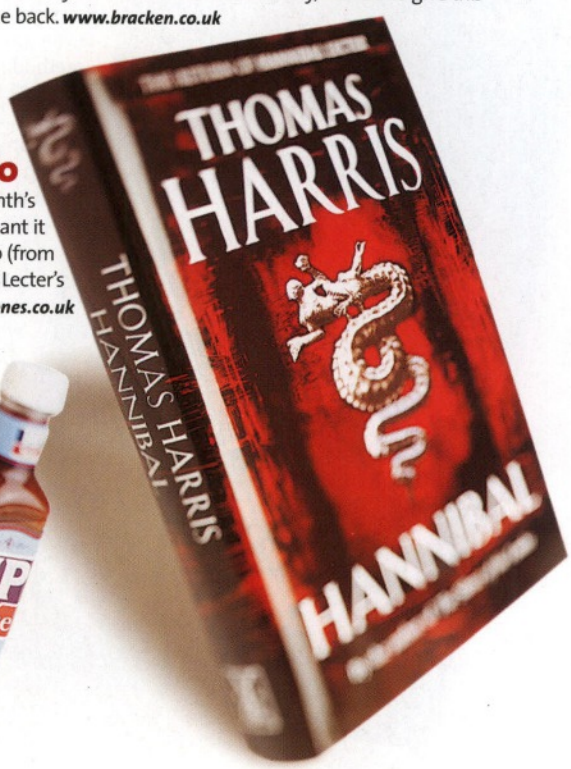
They're the only way to travel these days and to really lead the pack you need one of these futuristic little Area 51 runarounds from Aprilia. You're perhaps not going to buy a scooter before seeing it, but as confidence in online shopping grows, such major Net purchases are only a matter of time. Bracken, an Aprilia, BMW and KTM specialist, lets you email an enquiry or an order via its site and, within three months, it'll have a secure server for you to do the whole bit. Sadly, we had to give this one back. ***www.bracken.co.uk***

Bottle opener £8

Those Islington outlets are too big a schelp at lunchtime for us in the TW11 sticks. But Upper Street shop Aria has a limited range online, including this Monster opener we coveted. Talk to them direct about delivery. ***www.aria-shop.co.uk***

Hannibal £8.50

Thomas Harris's *Hannibal* was bought for last month's issue but a near three-week wait for delivery meant it missed the trolley. The book's a bargain at £8.50 (from £16.99), but would you want to wait that long for Lecter's latest juicy exploits? ***www.waterstones.co.uk***



Provisions £10.68

Given all the late nights we spend in the office, we felt we qualified for this ex-pats' grocery delivery service. This bundle cost around £10 (plus £10 delivery) – not cheap but worth it for that cousin in Outer Mongolia. International deliveries take 5-20 days ***www.britsabroad.co.uk***

PHOTOGRAPHY: NICK WRIGHT

Bubbly £199.90

Fed up of those Bolly hangovers? Try this ginseng version, Le Dame de Shanghai. Shame you can only buy by the case (12), but the price does include delivery and VAT. ***www.weirdpop.co.uk***

Freshlite glasses £49

Just what you've always wanted, a pair of rose-tinted glasses. Developed in conjunction with the British Medical Research Council, they also claim to filter out screen flicker. ***www.freshlite.com***

Big Bad Bow £24

Our next-door neighbours at *Stuff* magazine have been attacking us with one of these for days, so we looked to the Net for retaliation. And it worked, via the wonderful Toys R Us site. Delivery cost £2.50 but it is a sizeable object and arrived in just three days. ***www.toysrus.co.uk***

Fendi £19.95

You'd pay £38 for this normally and, what's more, it's hard to find Fendi perfume in the UK. EasyShop, a Net shop for women, still featured the offer as we went to press. Delivery is free and it arrived 24 hours later. ***www.easyshop.co.uk***

Kite £34.99

If the last time you bought a kite Dick Van Dyke was still flying them, you'll like the way this shop presents and explains the myriad of high flying options now available. We plumped for the sporty Flexifoil Xtro – means nothing to us either – but it looks good. Delivery is free but allow 28 days, or request otherwise by email. ***www.kiteshop.co.uk***

THE NET'S TOP TIPS FOR ONLINE SHOPPING

Keep to our simple guidelines, and there's no reason why online shopping should end in a puddle of tears

■ **CHECK THE SITE IS SECURE** A small padlock will appear in the bottom left of your browser to show that you can safely send credit card details through the site. Your Web browser will also tell you whether a site is secure or not when you enter it.

■ **SHOP WITH BRAND-NAME COMPANIES** As with any shopping, you're better off with a company you've actually heard of.

■ **CHECK DELIVERY TIMES AND CHARGES** Companies should tell you the delivery charge if there is one on their site. If you live in the Highlands and Islands or Ireland, you may find that free delivery does not apply.

■ **NEVER SEND ANYTHING BY EMAIL** If a site asks for card details by email, don't oblige. It's far, far easier for emails to be intercepted.

■ **PRINT THE CONTRACT** This is the only permanent record of your purchase, so make sure you keep it, along with your order number and other details. Don't forget, if it's a UK site, you have the same consumer rights as you do in the High Street.

■ **IF IT GOES WRONG, DON'T WORRY** Contrary to scare stories, online shopping is safer as well as often cheaper than traditional methods – and it's in the online store's interest to sort any problems out quickly.

‘Tall, dark, handsome M seeks dinner date. GSOH essential’

WORDS: PAUL WINSLOW; PICTURES: SOULA PETROU

THE CHALLENGE:
Find yourself a blind date using the Internet

THE CHALLENGER:
***the net*'s own young Lothario (his words, not ours), Paul Winslow**

Boy tries to meet girl

THE INTERNET IS RIFE WITH CLASSIC TALES OF romance. English man meets sweet American lady on the Internet, and their online romance takes off. The relationship blossoms, and the smitten young man soon journeys across the Atlantic with the sole intention of marrying his new sweetheart. Unfortunately, shortly before the big day, she promptly nicks his money and does a runner.

Happily, that's not what happened to me, but it was the fate of one poor Internet Romeo who ended up taking his former date

to court. With all of this in mind, I knew I had to be very careful indeed.

I, however, had no pretensions towards marriage. My sole mission was to get myself a date, or else face the ridicule of fellow colleagues claiming that I couldn't pull. They've never seen me at weekends when I'm fighting women off with a light sabre, so I had to prove myself by making use of what the Net had to offer. And when it comes to dating, it promises to offer a lot. At Match.com, a large US-run site, two million hopefuls have registered, 50,000 of who are from Britain. It's estimated that 5000 of the latter are active on the Net at any one time. When you consider that this is one site among hundreds of chat rooms, dating agencies and personal ad sites, the Internet's match-making potential is awesome.

Although my friends would probably disagree, I do have reasonable taste in women. I own a pair of beer goggles just like the next man, but I try not to wear them too often. When sober, I prefer a good-looking, flirtatious, self-confident lady with a sense of humour and just a hint of madness. Could I find someone to fit the bill? Only time would tell.

I duly signed up to a couple of online agencies, confiding in them everything from my sexual preference to my inside leg measurement. While Match.com (www.match.com) was very streamlined and not too difficult to sign up with, the registration at Datemaker (www.datemaker.co.uk) was downright strenuous, with some 60 multiple choice and 13 essay questions. After this exhaustive information-gathering I was somewhat surprised when one of the matches offered to me was in the 51-60 age bracket (which is older than my mother). I had very little response from my own adverts, but I am corresponding (as opposed to co-responding) with a lovely-sounding redhead whose ad I answered. She isn't online everyday, however, so it's slowly, slowly on that score.

My next port of call was to post personal ads. This was easy but getting an answer wasn't. Waiting for a response can take (and is still taking) ages, but you can bite the bullet and contact people who have placed their own ads. At times, it seemed that many people who post ads do so on a whim and then forget to check back – at least, that's my excuse for not having a great deal of success. Though I had a few responses, very little came of them and I was never in danger of needing betablockers to slow down my pulse.

But a bizarre thing happened when visiting Dating Direct (www.datingdirect.com). The search terms were very basic, and I was presented with a long list of women, many of whom were bisexual. For some strange reason I felt compelled to email one of them and introduce myself, despite the fact that I'm not into that kind of thing. The anonymity of the Net was clearly doing strange things to me. It was time to move on.

Chat rooms offer an easy way to get to know people quickly with the minimum of fuss. But while they may be great for flirting, they aren't an ideal way to score a date. My first encounter turned out to be a lady in America; the next lived in Manchester – a lot closer to London, but hardly a practical target for a night of sophisticated romance. Another

'Strangely, I found myself emailing a bisexual woman'

Bet she wishes she hadn't worn her Impulse after all

Like a virgin? Find one here at www.flirt.com

IT CAN'T BE HARD, BEING A WOMAN

It's official – it's easier for women to pull than it is for men. That's the conclusion of our research, anyway. If you don't believe us, just try this simple experiment. Walk into a chat room and tell all present you're a girl. It's the equivalent of opening a jam jar in a beehive. Then go somewhere else and say that you're a bloke: you're likely to get as much response as a chat-up line directed at Cameron Diaz. On one occasion five men in the same room asked if any women from London wanted to chat. In another there were only three girls in a romance chat room, compared to 20 men. It was almost embarrassing to see blokes trying to get their attention.

GETTING RAUNCHY

No matter how open-minded you think yourself, there are things on the Net that will shock you. When you start trying to meet partners online, just be careful where you point your mouse: while you may enter a site looking for a friendship or romance, there are others whose intentions are far less honourable. Take these two ads, for instance, which appeared on an innocuous looking site that we stumbled across: *www.flirt.com.*

'I'm 16 and im looking for anyone 16-40 and im a virgin. I dont mind how old someone is, just how good they are because I am a virgin and I don't wish to stay one for long. You can visit my home page for a pic of me at *http://homes.acmecity.com/music/mariachi/80/lollie.html.* How about it guys give a virgin a go.'

It turned out the above girl is safely tucked away in Australia, but beware, the following is a UK resident:

'Pole dancer, and fantastic shagger, (cyber or alley style!!), im a Leo, I have got big boobs, tight *****, long legs, blonde hair blue eyes.
'Do YOU wanna find out? yes u do! look baby, IM here, i leave everyone ELSE standing in a trance, or men, in a bed smiling with pleasure.'

enjoyable conversation came to a halt when I suggested a date: she was simply too freaked out by the idea.

I was having as much success as a windbreak in a hurricane, but fate – and my inimitable charm – soon came to the rescue. I struck up a conversation in a chat room with a lady who then decided to email me one afternoon. Granted, it was more that she was bored at work than for any other reason. But it was still a response. Purely in the name of fun we started emailing each other, and before you knew it we were 'talking' every day. It wasn't that I felt a yearning to speak to her all the time like some lovesick teenager, but it sure as hell made the working day a lot more interesting.

I knew I was on to a winner when her first email asked: 'I take it you liked the film *You've Got Mail*? It starred Meg Ryan (me) and Tom Hanks (hopefully not you).' While I had no intention of recreating the tacky love story in question, the sentiment amused me and, naturally, one flirty email deserved another. 'Never seen it,' I replied, 'but if you're Meg Ryan then I might be into a re-enactment'. To which she declared that she did indeed have a 'Ryanesque' appearance.

Now, I know very little about Meg Ryan except what most men can recall about her: that she once faked an orgasm in a restaurant in *When Harry Met Sally*. And that was all I needed to remember.

So I couldn't resist enquiring whether she did indeed carry her Ryanesque appearance to such lengths. She replied that rather than fake orgasms in restaurants, she preferred to wait for the real thing. This sort of talk might sound as though we were acting like sex-starved nymphomaniacs – not the case at all. But it goes to show that the nature of email means you can get away with saying things that you would never normally dream of.

Subsequent conversations were toned down somewhat, but it was intriguing to note that although after a week I could tell you what kind of social life she had, I had no idea of her age or where she was from. I had to leave something to the imagination, after all.

When it came to arranging a date, she was a little fazed by the whole concept

match.com
ONLINE MATCHMAKING
More than 2,000,000 singles have used our service worldwide!
Log-in Here
Try us → Free!
Free Trial
It Works!
Thinking of joining? Find out more... Click Here
Register for a free trial subscription to Match.Com, "the leader in online matchmaking." Whether you're looking for an activity partner or a soul-mate, Match.Com will connect you to other successful, professional singles in your area. It really works!
"an pace to change the way mainstream Americans find their romantic partners."
– USA Today
"The leading online dating service."
– Newsweek
Match.com: has enough hopefuls to light your fire

'Posting an ad is easy. However, getting a reply isn't'

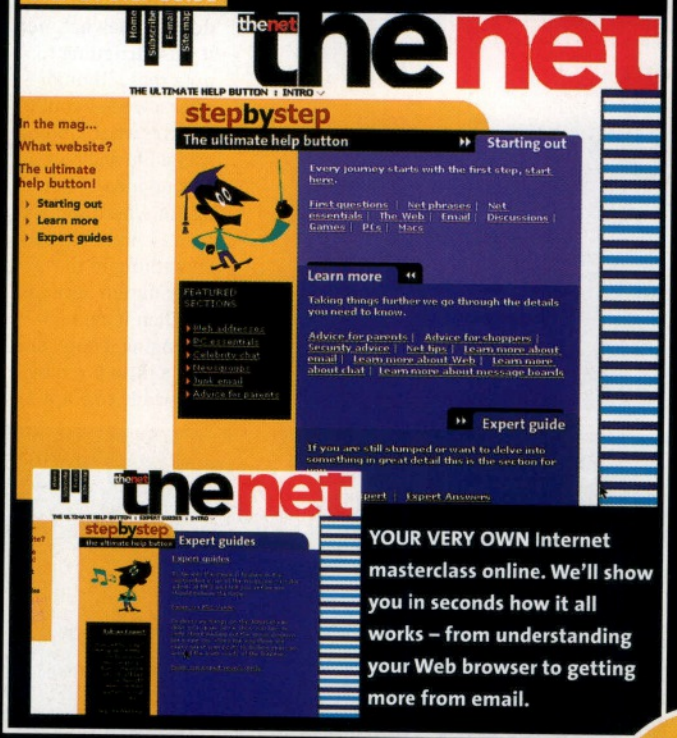
*HALF WRAP & SOUP 5.00
* CHICKEN FAJITA WRAP 5.00
HUMMOUS & LEMON COUS COUS * WRAP (N) 4.00
* SMOKED SALMON & SPRING ONION CREAM CHEESE WRAP 5.00
* BLT & AVOCADO MAYONNAISE WRAP 5.00
ALL WRAPS SERVED W. CRISPS
• PASTA & OTHER DAILY SPECIALS & SANDWICHES & SOUP - CHEFS CALL - SEE SPECIALS' BOARDS
(V) DISH IS MEAT-FREE, BUT NOT SUITABLE FOR VEGANS
(N) DISH CONTAINS NUTS/SEEDS
* EXPRESS DISHES DELIVERED WITHIN 10 MINUTES WHENEVER POSSIBLE
PLEASE ORDER & PAY AT THE BAR
'Back In the '70s, my flares really were this big'

STYLING: JUICE; DEL'S CLOTHES YESTERDAY'S BREAD; DEBBIE'S CLOTHES, HER OWN; THANKS TO THE SLUG AND LETTUCE, UPPER STREET ISLINGTON

THE MAG'S ONLY HALF THE STORY

OK, you can have one without the other, but why would you want to? *The net's* Web site is the perfect complement to the printed magazine with masterclasses, technical advice and links to every URL featured in the mag. Here's how to use it...

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE



YOUR VERY OWN Internet masterclass online. We'll show you in seconds how it all works – from understanding your Web browser to getting more from email.

WHAT WEBSITE?

thenet
The new internet mag
What website?:
what website?
The cream of the Web
Each month we build up a list of sites we know you are going to enjoy. From extreme sports to scooter sites, from university sites to clebrity puppets, we have them all here. In each months magazine you'll find a password that lets you into what web site. All the listings are here so the only web address you need is www.whatwebsite.com and the only magazine you'll need is *the net*.
Where can I...
buy games online?
We're the only magazine that has the answers before you even know the questions.
movies
tv & video
music
sport
travel
fashion
celebrities
cars & bikes
homes
games
money
learning
computers

WHY SPEND HOURS typing in Web addresses from the magazine, when the links from this month's WhatWebsite? listings can be found on our site? You need the password to get in (see left) – but once there, you'll find every category neatly sorted and fully searchable, from movies to sport, from learning to travel. It took work, so use it!

IN YOU GO... Access our What Website? online section with the password *'torn'*

www.thenetmag.co.uk

PLUS This month on the site

NET SOUNDS Try your hand at our interactive quiz, plus the latest on NetAid
DATING Follow in the links of *the net*'s very own in-house Romeo
TO WIN Eight fantastic Ryanair flights up for grabs

(which was nothing to how she was going to feel when she actually met me), but once a rendezvous had finally been organised the conversation became much more relaxed. Predictably, there were jokes about me wearing a carnation in my buttonhole and about what would happen if we thought each other ugly. We decided if that were the case, we would fix each other up with one of our mates in the hope that they would have more success.

The conversations continued but, with the big day looming, it was finally time to leave the safety and comfort of the online world, where no-one sees your face, and venture out with some real-world charm.

The old Hi Karate works every time

Boy met girl

I STILL KNEW VERY LITTLE ABOUT HER. This was going to be interesting. We arranged to meet at a pub in – where else? – Soho but, just as I walked into the bar, the phone rang and she said she'd been held up at work and would be a bit late. Nice of her to let me know, but it didn't make me look any less of a loser while I stood at the bar on my own.

When she did eventually turn up, she immediately amused me by going up to a complete stranger and asking him if he was called Paul. Maybe I should have worn that carnation after all.

Despite that initial *faux pas*, we proceeded to have a wonderful time. Any woman who prefers to polish off a couple of champagne cocktails in a bar rather than go for a meal is always going to be a winner in my books. We did get as far as discussing what type of food we were going to have, but as a wise man once said, you should never eat on an empty stomach, and she obviously agreed.

Among many amusing conversations, the most ironic one concerned why we were there in the first place. Her friends had been winding her up that I must be some kind of loser to have to go on a blind date – but we both agreed that we were doing it 'for the craic', as the Irish would say. I, of course, kept stum about it all being in the line of duty – and, thankfully, neither of us mentioned the Internet all night.

'It would soon be time to leave the online world where no-one sees your face'

THE NET'S HOT SPOTS FOR ONLINE DATING

Don't be put off by our in-house Romeo's lack of success: give it a go

INTRODUCTION AGENCIES

Match.com

www.match.com

The best online matchmaking service with two million members. The majority of these are American, but there is now a specific UK service. For your money you get search facilities, a chat room, matching and the ability to create your personal profile. Free one-week trial. $14.95 per month with discounts for extended subscriptions.

Datemaker

datemaker.co.uk

To register you have to fill in an involved questionnaire that has a real sense of humour, followed by rather a lot of essay questions. The service then emails you every day with potential matches. You are able to view all of their completed questionnaires and email them directly if the fancy takes you. Free to register, but you pay £3 per week to send emails to any other members.

Dating Direct

www.datingdirect.com

Very basic search service and matchmaker function. Posting your profile is quite easy, but many of the fields seem a bit superfluous. It's all free, though.

PERSONALS

UK Personals

www.uk-personals.net

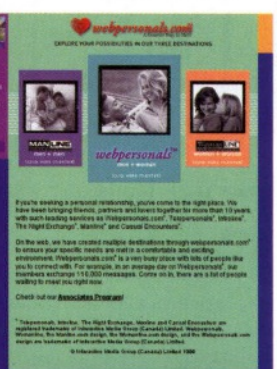
Your ad will have basic details, but the rest is very much up to you as the main part is your own text. Offers very little in the way of anonymity, as your email address is available to all and sundry.

FREE

Webpersonals

www.webpersonals.com

Three sections for men and women, men and men or women and women. Within those you can look through the dating section – romance or intimate – for those seeking sexual encounters with singles or couples(!). Various search facilities, chat and messaging. One week free trial, then $19.95 for two months.

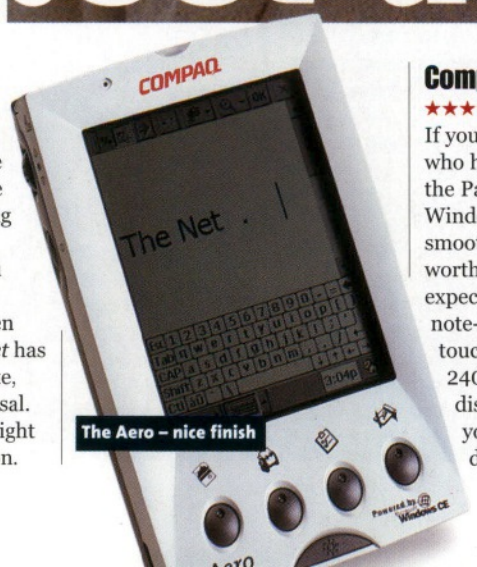


WORDS: STEVE SHIPSIDE PICTURES: IMAGE.NET

The choice of Net-ready and Net-related gadgets is enough to send anyone's head in a spin. Read our guide to the really useful ones

Inspect-a-gadget

Face it, unless you've got a palmtop to link to your laptop to link to your desktop, you're a technological nobody these days. And if you're still taking holiday snaps in film and telling the time by GMT, you stand to be laughed out of cyberspace before you've even logged on. Never fear, *the net* has bundled together its favourite, stylish gadgets for your perusal. And if they're not available right now, they're coming real soon.



The Aero – nice finish

Compaq Aero 2100

★★★★

If you aren't among the droves who have pledged allegiance to the Palm Pilot, Compaq's Windows CE PDA – in a natty smooth metallic finish – is well worth a look. It offers all the expected PDA features (calendar, note-taker, infra-red port, touch-sensitve screen) but its 240 x 320 resolution colour display offers a clarity that you wouldn't expect from a device of this size. You can also record those thoughts on the move with the voice recording facility, and then play them back on the audio player.

STAR FEATURES **Clarity of colour display; looks natty; voice record will never let you forget that bright idea**

PRICE **£350**

www.compaq.co.uk

Psion Series 5 mx

★★★

And while we're on PDAs... The trusty favourite gets a faster processor, a face lift, and most

'These gadgets are doing my head in'

importantly, a Java virtual machine all of its own. It's still a monochrome world on a Psion, but being Java-enabled adds a world of difference to psurfing with the new psilver Psion. E-mail setup is much simplified and claims to be ready to roll out of the box, but without an in-built modem you still need a data phone or PC modem.

STAR FEATURES Svelte silver casing; Java virtual machine
PRICE £429.95
www.psion.co.uk

Apple iBook

★★★★★

It had to happen; first the iMac, now the Apple portables get the winegum treatment with the iBook. Carrying on the tradition of fruity flavours, the eye-popping iBook comes in love-it-or-loathe it tangerine or blueberry. At its launch, a number of commentators compared it to a toilet seat – but still said they loved it. Featuring a 12.1-inch display, CD-ROM and G3 microprocessor, the iBook's i-credentials rest on its built-in 56K modem, 100Base-T Ethernet networking, and the nifty little AirPort (see over the page). After much waiting, there's now a UK price but availability is yet to be decided, although it's likely to be towards the end of September. Check out the online UK store for more details of its arrival.

Tangerine dream iBook

STAR FEATURES Take a look – do you have to ask?
PRICE £1249
www.apple.com/ukstore

ukbetting.com

The Internet Bookmaker

Some things are simpler than others

A.

1. Find an excuse to leave the office.
2. Find cash machine.
3. Queue to withdraw cash.
4. Find your local bookmaker
5. Fill in betting slip.
6. Queue to place bet
7. Finally place bet

B.

1. Connect to www.ubetting.com
2. Place bet.

UKBETTING.COM offers you secure, live interactive betting directly from the privacy of your own desktop.

It couldn't be simpler

SWITCH SOLO DELTA

We think we might go buy a Rio...

Rio 500

★★★★★

MP3 beats even 'sex' as the word most frequently typed into search engines, and with the new Rio 500, it's in with a chance for the number one slot. With 64Mb of memory (twice the old Rio), the new 500 can store and play back up to two hours of downloaded CD-quality music. It handles more formats and has a larger display, but as any dedicated follower of fashion will tell you, what matters is the look. The 'teal' and purple versions are suitably iMac groovy, but we would plump for the silver, which makes it look like you're wired to a Zippo.

STAR FEATURES Double the storage; double the fun – and check out the colours

PRICE £299 inc VAT from the end of August, made by Diamond Multimedia

www.diamondmm.com

Swatch Beat watch

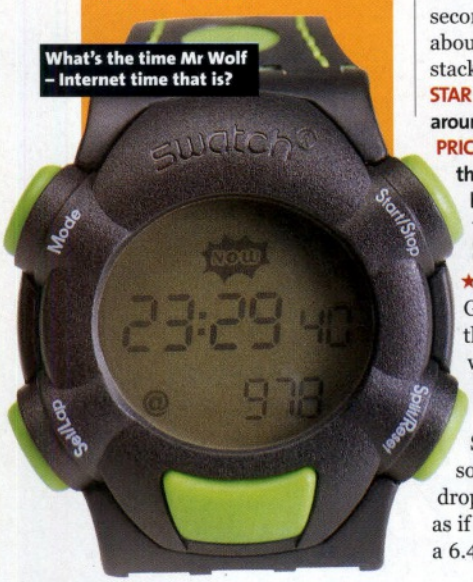
★★★★

It's only a matter of time before James Bond gets one of these. In case you missed last year's announcement, Swatch has invented Internet time, which divides the 24 hours of the day into 1000 beats. Each Beat lasts precisely one minute and 26.4 seconds and it means that if you're talking to someone in Australia, you can actually be in the same time zone. It also tells normal time, has a countdown facility and alarm.

STAR FEATURES Beat time's cool but we like the animations by famous cartoonists on the face.

PRICE £40

www.swatch.com



What's the time Mr Wolf – Internet time that is?

Iomega Clik! Drive

★★★

Are you clogging up your portable's hard drive with downloaded graphics and sound files? Or perhaps you just don't want to use the company's hard drive for your personal stuff? Clik! from Iomega, the people who brought us the Zip and Jazz drive, could be the answer. The wafer-thin mint of removable drives fits into the PC card slot, giving you 40Mb of conveniently removable storage.

STAR FEATURES Cuteness; convenience; capacity

PRICE £150

www.iomega-europe.com

Apple AirPort

★★★★

The latest Apple in the arrivals hall is this wireless networking option, which allows up to 10 iBook users to surf the net without a wire – as long as they don't stray more than 150 feet from the frisbee-shaped base station, that is. As well as the aforementioned base station, each machine needs an AirPort card, but once kitted out it can send and receive data at blistering speeds (11 Mbits per second). Expect multiple gags about air traffic control, holding stacks, etc.

STAR FEATURES Have nine friends around surfing without wires

PRICE UK price TBA, US price $99 for the card, and $299 for the AirPort base from *www.apple.com*

Sony Vaio PCG F200

★★★★

Gone are the days – thankfully – when laptops weighed as much as your desktop and had only a fraction of the power. The Sony Vaio is slim, sophisticated, and has drop-dead gorgeous looks. And as if that weren't enough, it's got a 6.4Gb hard drive, a Pentium II processor, a 14-inch TFT colour screen, and a DVD player to boot – making it a portable cinema as well as a computer. It's slightly weighty, but with all that power, it's well worth it. If you're not in the iBook camp, this is the next best-looking laptop around, albeit more expensive.

STAR FEATURES Capability and looks. Oh, and the built-in DVD player

PRICE Around £3000

www.sony.co.uk

Toshiba PDR-M4 digital camera

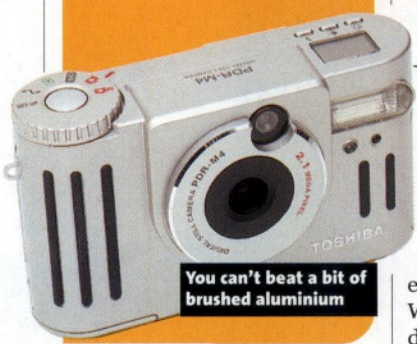
★★★★

If you're looking for a brushed aluminium digital camera to co-ordinate with your other accessories, this Tosh PDR-M4 2.14 million Megapixel is for you. It also happens to be one of the fastest digital cameras around, capable of taking one picture a second. Images can be exported to PC or Mac or played through a VCR. Three levels of resolution will satisfy, whether you want family snaps or pics for a Web page.

STAR FEATURES Compact; nice finish

PRICE £549

www.toshiba.co.uk



You can't beat a bit of brushed aluminium

Pretec Compact Modem

★★★★

Bought one of the new Windows CE PDAs? Wondering how to get on the Net? Baffled by what that CompactFlash slot is for? Here's the answer: the CompactModem slots into those handhelds and PDAs with a CompactFlash slot, and gives you 56k speeds, all for an extra weight of just 15g. And it also comes with a PC card converter, so you can slip it into the PC card slot on your laptop.

STAR FEATURES Tiny; dual purpose

PRICE Manufactured by Pretec, available for £115 from PPCP at *www.ppcp.co.uk*

Nokia 7110

★★★★★

While it seems that everyone and his grandmother has a mobile phone these days, few people have a phone like this one. Access to the World Wide Web with an Internet WML microbrowser and high speed data support (14.4kbps) is just the start. It's small, slim, light at just 141g and has a standby time of 11 days and a talk time of nearly five hours. And to top it all off, there's a choice of 35 ringing tones to annoy everyone else next time you're on the train.

STAR FEATURES Net access; long battery life

PRICE TBA

www.nokia.com

HP Jornada 680

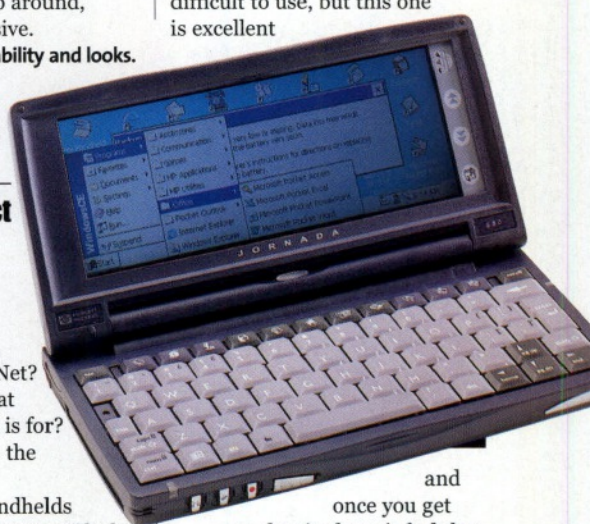
★★★★

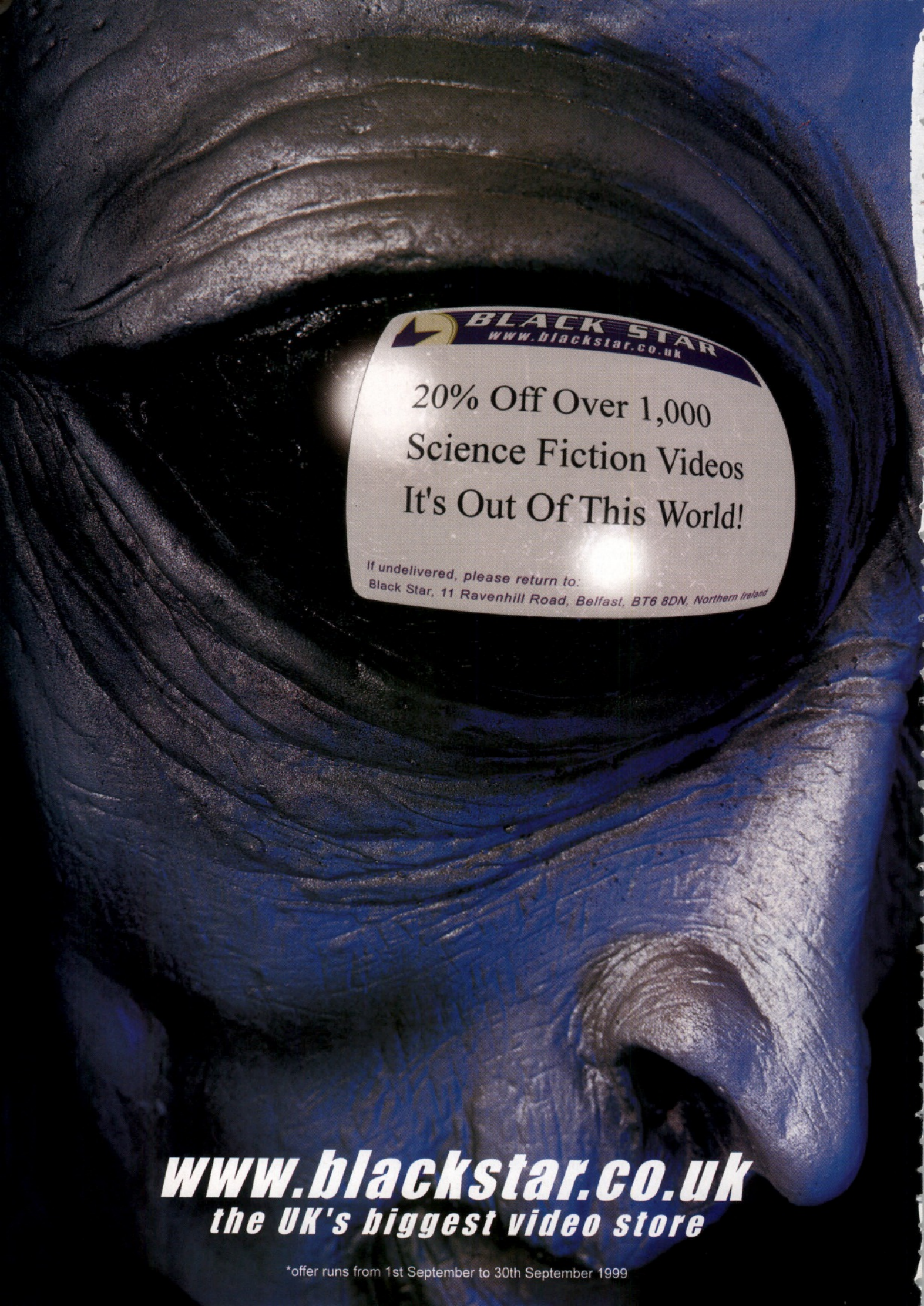
We like this one a lot... and reckon you will, too. While it's a tad heavier (at 1lb) and bigger than the the Psion featured, you'll want to carry this around everywhere. It comes with Windows CE pre-installed and does pretty much everything your desktop can. Access to the Net is via the built-in 56k modem and Microsoft Pocket Internet Explorer. The colour screen is clear and easy to read. Keyboards on handhelds like this are sometimes fiddly and difficult to use, but this one is excellent and once you get used to it, doesn't feel that much smaller than your average laptop's keys. The battery lasts up to seven hours. The colour (a good solid purple) is fab, too.

STAR FEATURES Net-ready; colour screen; streamlined good looks

PRICE Selling for around $900 in the US

www.hp.com

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Black Star, 11 Ravenhill Road, Belfast, BT6 8DN, Northern Ireland
www.blackstar.co.uk
the UK's biggest video store
*offer runs from 1st September to 30th September 1999

what website?

October 1999

YOUR MONTHLY GUIDE TO THE COOLEST, CLASSIEST SITES ON THE NET

IF IT'S NOT HERE, IT'S NOT WORTH VISITING...

SHOW ME THE SITES...

What Website?

OCTOBER

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

Our team of specially-trained Web monkeys have spent weeks trawling the Net for the best sites out there – so you can get the wheat without wasting time on the chaff. Here, sorted into 18 themes, are this month's choice cuts – and below is the best way to see them

www.whatwebsite.com

LET US DO THE WORK FOR YOU

Visit ***www.whatwebsite.com*** for links to every single entry featured in What Website? It'll save you hours typing in the address of the hundreds of sites we feature, but you will need a password to enter. This month, the password is...

TORN

'Another page please, Jeeves'

Home
Subscribe
E-mail
Site map
thenet
thenet
In the mag...
Wired news
Bet your life?
Chuck D on MP3
The big kick-off
What website?
The ultimate help button!
What website?:
what website?
The cream of the Web
Each month we build up a list of sites we know you are going to enjoy. From extreme sports to scooter sites, from university sites to clebrity puppets, we have them all here. In each months magazine you'll find a password that lets you into what web site. All the listings are here so the only web address you need is www.whatwebsite.com and the only magazine you'll need is the net .
Where can I...
buy games online?
We're the only magazine that has the answers before you even know the questions.
Using our online database,
movies
tv & video
music
sport
travel
news & media
celebrities
cars & bikes
homes
games
money
science
learning

FREE SOFTWARE

THE ULTIMATE HELP BUTTON ***www.thenetmag.co.uk/helpbutton*** Our online guide has all the essential free software reviewed and rated with links

PLAYING MULTIMEDIA BROWSER WATCH
http://browserwatch.internet.com/plug-in.html
A complete list of browser plug-ins.

REALPLAYER G2
www.real.com
Cross-platform free software for streaming movie (RealVideo) and audio (RealAudio) files across the Internet.

QUICKTIME 4.0
www.apple.com/quicktime
Version 4 of this multimedia software will play just about anything, including MP3 files.

MICROSOFT MEDIAPLAYER
www.microsoft.com/mediaplayer
Plays streaming audio and video files saved in the MediaPlayer format.

SHOCKWAVE & FLASH
www.shockwave.com
Common plug-ins that enable sound, great animation effects and even games on Web sites.

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MOVIE REVIEWS
'You talking to me?'

70 TELEVISION
Child stars gone bad

79 SPORT
It's the rugby World Cup

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INTERNET RADIO
Yes, people really do broadcast here

87 FOOD
Become an online wine expert

76 MUSIC
Cheer up, Frankie

THE LISTINGS

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Get the lowdown on South Park's super-gross big-screen debut

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Help – it's a 50-foot woman...

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The best of British sitcoms

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The remotest stations on earth

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What's hot on autumn turntables

MUSIC LOUNGE LIZARDS 76
Music to watch girls (or boys) by

SPORT RUGBY 79
Celebrate the World Cup online

SPORT SILLY SPORTS 83
Why the Welsh love bog-snorkelling

TRAVEL 84
Backpackers – you've got to love them

FOOD & DRINK 87
Raid the cellars; it's wine online

CELEBRITIES 89
Whatever happened to the child stars?

COMEDY 93
Make a dull office day more bearable

HEALTH 94
Got a problem? Diagnose it on the Net

MONEY 96
Start your own business now

LEARNING 99
Parlez Franglais? Then learnez votre self a new language sur l'Internet

GAMES 101
Shockwave games to amaze

KIDS 103
Teenage angst solved online

COMPUTERS & SOFTWARE 104
Bored with your desktop? Dump it

WEIRD 106
What a bunch of cults

Click before the flicks

MOVIE RELEASES Kubrick's swansong, apes and a beauty pageant. Oh yes, and, er, *South Park*

AMERICAN PIE

Jason Biggs, Chris Klein, Thomas Ian Nicholas ★★★★

Four horny teenage boys resolve to lose their virginity by prom night in this hilarious, oddly sweet teen comedy. Assisted by a likeable cast, *American Pie* dishes out one sharp gag after another, with enough gross-out moments – stuffing a pie, semen in a glass – to keep us blissfully happy. ***www.american-piemovie.com*** Reading the plot summary alone might gross you out for life...

'But this is the men's locker room, ma'am'

ANALYZE THIS

Robert de Niro, Billy Crystal, Lisa Kudrow ★★★

Groundhog Day director Harold Ramis attempts to splice the neurotic comedy of Woody Allen with the mob mentality of a Scorsese flick in this likeable but forgettable comedy. De Niro is a goodfella experiencing something of a mid-life crisis, while Crystal is the shrink enlisted, unwillingly of course, to sort out his head. Reminiscent of 'family' drama *The Sopranos*, only with much less edge and many more laughs. Best scene: DeNiro's *Godfather* dream. ***www.analyzethis.com*** Where to start first: the compelling 'what kind of godfather are you?' quiz, or a stop-over at the on-site therapist?

BLOOD, GUTS, BULLETS & OCTANE

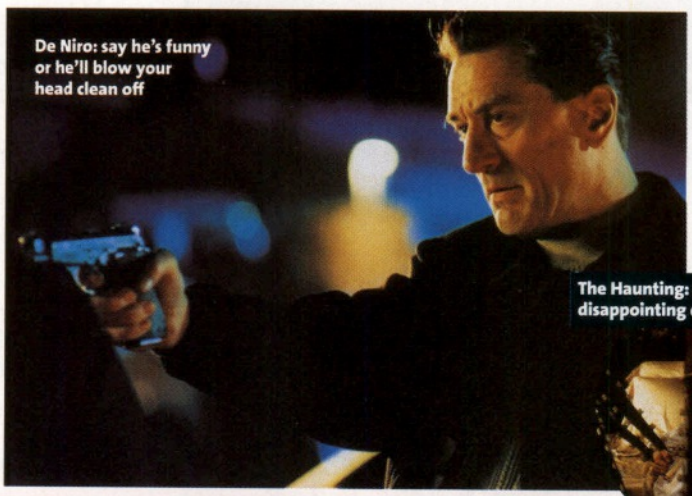
Joe Carnahan, Dan Leis ★★

Just because a person can make a movie doesn't mean they should. Case in point: Joe Carnahan, author, editor, director and star of this no-budget effort, a cheap and reasonably cheerful thriller with lots of talk and zero production values. Two desperate salesmen babysit a car with something deeply strange in the trunk, but who really cares? A good home movie that should have stayed there, this is worth neither your time nor your money. ***www.leisuresuit.net/Webzine/articles/joe_carnahan.shtml*** Read Carnahan's views on life, love and his latest film.

DROP DEAD GORGEOUS

Kirstie Alley, Ellen Barkin, Kirsten Dunst, Denise Richards ★★★★

Hilarious satire on the supremely white-trashy US beauty pageant scene, shot in the now familiar mock-documentary style, as we join the search for 1995's Mount Rose Teen Princess. Rich bitch Kirstie Alley and vacuous, possibly homicidal daughter Denise Richards square off against trailer queen Ellen Barkin and her smart, perky offspring Kirsten Dunst. Sick, scathing and very, very silly, this has, among other delights, Richards dancing with a stuffed Jesus on a cross. See it. ***www.ddgorgeous.com*** Catch the results of the site's own online beauty pageant, which, much to our disappointment, closed before it reached British audiences.



De Niro: say he's funny or he'll blow your head clean off

THE HAUNTING

Liam Neeson, Catherine Zeta-Jones, Lili Taylor ★★

From the director of *Speed*, Jan De Bont, a man who knows everything about pace and special effects but nothing about atmosphere and subtlety, comes this second screen version of Shirley Jackson's spooky novel *The Haunting of Hill House*. Academics inhabit a remote gothic mansion and get scared silly, but the performances are super-bland, and after a solid build-up, the movie shows too much – and the climax is regrettably laughable. A major disappointment.

The Haunting: another disappointing climax

WHAT THE SITES ARE SAYING

	aint-it-cool-news.com	cinematter.com	eonline.com	film.com	mrcranky.com	salon.com
American Pie	👍	👎	👍	👎	👎	👍
Analyze This	👎	👍	👎	👎	👎	👍
Eyes Wide Shut	👍	👎	👍	👍	👎	👎
The Haunting	👎	👎	👎	👎	👎	👎
South Park: Bigger, Longer & Uncut	👍	👎	👍	👍	👎	👍

Eyes Wide Shut

Tom Cruise, Nicole Kidman
www.eyeswideshut.com ★★★★★

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

Director Stanley Kubrick's 13th and final feature is as stylish and involving as any of his previous works. Cruise delivers the performance of his career as a wealthy doctor who embarks on a journey of sexual discovery upon discovering that his wife – played by Kidman on perfect form – has outside interests of her own. Despite the bare flesh on offer, the movie's length, depth and studied manner rules out a teenage audience, aiming itself squarely at Gen X and above. Check the site for all the trailers and clips you could want (exclusive to this source), plus a message from Kubrick's widow.

www.asylum.com/movies/h/haunting/
Rather stingy synopsis of the plot, plus a brief trailer.

INSTINCT

Anthony Hopkins, Cuba Gooding Jr, Donald Sutherland ★

Having spent too much time in Africa with his gorilla chums, our Tony gets all monkeyfied and kills a bunch of locals. Packed off to a Stateside loony bin, this latterday Lord Greystoke comes under the watchful gaze of Cuba's go-getting resident shrink. Male bonding ensues as Tone teaches his new pal a little something about life, but you'll give up on this odd couple long before all the hippy-dippy nonsense kicks in. Melodramatic tosh, frankly.
movies.go.com/instinct/
Wonder for hours at how old Hopkins looks with a flowing white beard.

Tony? Let go of the monkey, Tony

THE ITALIAN JOB

Michael Caine, Noel Coward, Benny Hill ★★★★★

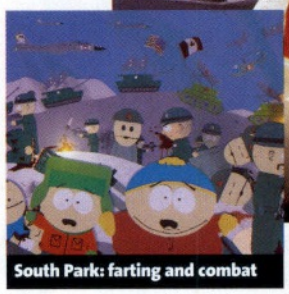
Cheeky British caper movie, with edgy Cockney charmer Michael Caine at the height of his powers, leading a familiar cast through the streets and piazzas of Turin, Italy, for the most audacious heist of all time: £4 million, snatched in heavy traffic and spirited away in the trunks of three spiffy Mini-Coopers – one red, one white, one blue. Written and directed with some flair and imagination, this pacy '60s classic is a must-see.
www.geocities.com/MotorCity/2706/italjob.htm#film
Fun-packed fan site with info on the film, the cars and the annual Italian Job rally. Don't bother with the screensaver, though.

The Italian Job: gold, lots of money and nifty Minis

SOUTH PARK: BIGGER, LONGER AND UNCUT

Trey Parker, Matt Stone, Mary Kay Bergman, Isaac Hayes ★★★★

Kyle, Stan, Kenny and Cartman sing, swear and bitch their way through this feature-length tribute to combat, farting (shame about the comma) and sex with Satan. Canadian anal superstars Terrance and Phillip unleash their first movie – *Asses of Fire* – on an unsuspecting world, and war with Canada ensues. Sick, crude and wonderfully gross, it includes such memorable musical highlights as *Uncle F*cka*, *Blame Canada* and the now-classic *Kyle's Mom's a Bitch*. So what else were you expecting?



South Park: farting and combat

www.southparkmovie.com
With seemingly half the Web dedicated to unofficial *South Park* sites, the certified one had to deliver the goods. It does. Enjoy Shockwave games, screensaver downloads and animations galore, Cartman fans.

CLASSIC MOVIE

FLASH GORDON

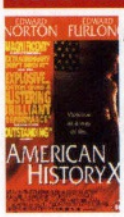
Sam J. Jones, Topol, Melody Anderson, Max Von Sydow (1980)
'Flash, I love you, but we only have 14 hours to save the Earth...' Earthling director Mike Hodges takes us on a one-way trip to Mongo for an exotic comicbook adventure with humour, a flair for kitsch, and a top glam rock soundtrack courtesy of Queen (and Howard Snowman Blake).

Defending our planet from superfiend Ming the Merciless (Sydow), likeable jock Flash (Jones) rockets into outer space with sidekick chums Zarkov (Topol) and Dale (Anderson).
www.geocities.com/ Hollywood/4262/
There's a Flash page out there.

Flash prepares for re-entry

Please release me...

VIDEO RELEASES Dead strippers, mass murder and psycho fascists. Lovely...



AMERICAN HISTORY X

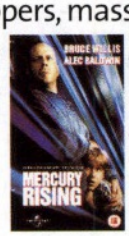
Edward Norton, Edward Furlong

Taking control of the movie from eccentric director Tony Kaye, Oscar-nominated actor Ed Norton delivers a powerful performance as a violent white supremacist who learns the error of his ways only to see his brother (Furlong) following the same path.
www.historyx.com

ELIZABETH

Cate Blanchett, Geoffrey Rush, Christopher Eccleston, Joseph Fiennes

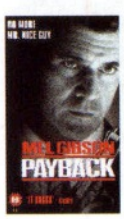
Proving that you have to go back more than 400 years to find a worthwhile royal, director Shekhar Kapur takes the unusual and eventful life of 16th-century superstar Queen Elizabeth and delivers a compelling thriller.
www.elizabeth-themovie.com



MERCURY RISING

Bruce Willis, Alec Baldwin, Miko Hughes

Slaphead Willis sleepwalks through this dire thriller about an unbreakable code and the autistic boy who cracks it. Chubby government agent Baldwin despatches henchmen aplenty, not that it helps enliven this bore.
www.geocities.com/Hollywood/Boulevard/1207/mercury.html



PAYBACK

Mel Gibson, Gregg Henry

Deeply stupid remake of John Boorman's classic '60s thriller *Point Blank*, with Mel Gibson as a double-crossed bad guy who wipes out an entire crime syndicate in pursuit of the money they owe him. Inept and utterly pointless.
www.paybackmovie.com

PLEASANTVILLE

Tobey Maguire, Reese Witherspoon, Jeff Daniels

Watchable but unremarkable fable about living life to the max, yawn, as precocious '90s teenagers Reese and Tobey get sucked into a corny '50s TV show to teach the stupid people what's what. Slightly funny.
www.nlcpub.com/Relsched/pleasantville.html

VERY BAD THINGS

Christian Slater, Cameron Diaz

Slater and his stag night buddies are stuck with disposing of 105 pounds of dead stripper in this twisted, bloody black comedy. Stylishly written and directed by Peter Berg, star of hit television series *Chicago Hope*.
www.verybadthings.com

WORDS: JOHN MULLEN

The A to B of films

B-MOVIES Not every film is a Hollywood blockbuster. But even celluloid calamities are held in high regard somewhere on the Web

Badmovies.org

www.badmovies.org ★★★★★

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

Remember that immortal line from the 1969 feature *Gamera vs Guiron*: 'Let's eat the kids later and let's fix the spacecraft first'? No, me neither. This site is jam-packed with fantastic sound clips and stills from some of the worst movies ever made. These guys know a bad movie when they see one, and, unlike most other B-movie sites, they don't bother to pretend that they're dealing with cult classics. Click the audio clips for the bottom line on B-bombs.

Kelly Brook in *Attack of the 50ft Presenter Who Really Wasn't Fired; She Resigned, Honest*

The Astounding B Monster

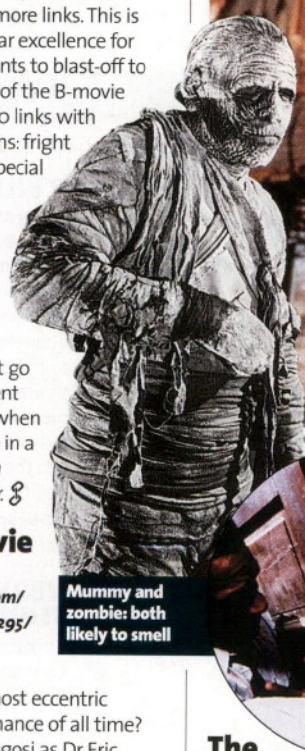
www.bmonster.com/index.html ★★★★

Look out, Brad! It's the attack of the 50-foot Web page. A brilliant site for buffs and beginners alike. Put on your best 'Pigs... in... spaaaace' voice and read all about films such as *The Brain from Planet Arous*. It's easy to laugh at the 1950s, but this is one site dedicated to proving that the 'B' in B-movie doesn't stand for bad.

The B Film Web Ring

www.webring.org/cgi-bin/webring?ring=bfilm;list ★★★

Links, links and more links. This is the links page par excellence for anyone who wants to blast-off to the outer-limits of the B-movie genre. Over a 100 links with short descriptions: fright flicks, B-movie special effects, zombie movies, brain movies, sci-fi erotica – an everlasting night of the living dead. Just remember: don't go into the basement during a storm when you know you're in a film called *Satan Lives in My Cellar*.



Mummy and zombie: both likely to smell

The B Movie Guide

www.geocities.com/Hollywood/Set/5295/Bmovies.html ★★★★

Who gave the most eccentric B-movie performance of all time? Was it: a) Bela Lugosi as Dr Eric Vornoff in *Bride of the Monster* or b) John Reynolds as Torgo in *Manos, the Hands of Fate*? Waddaya mean, you don't know? Point your browser at James Mannan's site and find out what you're missing: sex, horror, sci-fi and cheese.

The B Movie Theatre

www.b-movie.com ★★★

OK, so now you know everything there is to know about B-movies, you own a Super 8 which your dad bought circa 1974, and you're gonna make your own epic. Here is the improbably-named Ron Bonk Web site. Ron, director/producer of *City of the Vampires*, is now giving his efforts to helping wannabe B-movie makers produce and distribute their masterpieces.

Bubblegum

www.elicab.freeserve.co.uk/bubblegum/bubble.htm ★★★

This site contains issues numbers one to four of the Internet's number one B-movie e-zine: a 'zine that goes beyond the valley of the dolls. Features include Q&As with B-babes and, in issue three, a rare interview with Gunnar Hansen – who played Leatherface in one of the most notorious of B-movies, *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. The latest issue includes an interview with B+ Productions, who are still making such future classics as as *Vamp* and *Evil Ambitions*.

Dave and Jim's B Movie Review

ratfactor.com/movies/ ★★★★

Dave says he's the bastard child of a lost hiker and a she-wolf. Jim, on the other hand, was produced from goat sperm, bat ovum and human DNA. You might suspect these guys of not taking B-movies seriously – but bear in mind that they've spent most of their lives reviewing them. That does strange things to people.

Drive In Movies

pages.ripco.com: BoBo/~brian/drive_in.html

★★★

'From somewhere beyond space... IT came! Causing Panic! Spreading terror! IT conquered the world!' All the way from the planet Mothra comes a site committed to reliving the joys of the drive-in B-movie. And remember, the reason these movies are so good, says webmaster Brian, is because they're 'trashy, cheap and badly acted'. Masterful evaluation of the genre, Brian, quite masterful.

Brains and spleen for tea *again*?

THE PRESIDENTIAL PLAYER

Look, it's almost human

Perhaps the most famous B-movie actor of all time is the man who described himself in his biography as the 'Errol Flynn of B-movies'. In a life story not unlike a B-movie plot, he went on to become the most powerful man in the world. Yes, we're talking about Ronald Reagan. From the '30s to the '60s, Reagan appeared in over 50 films, including the 1957 *Hellcats of the Navy*, in which he played Commander Casey Adams. This, the only film in which he starred alongside his wife, Nancy, was directed by one of the great directors of the genre, John Agar (who also has the legendary *The Brain from Planet Arous* and the *Attack of the Fifty Foot Woman* to his credit). Find out why sci-fi might have been his thing at *www.tje.net/para/documents/reagan.htm*

best film sites ★★★★★

where can I...

GET LATEST NEWS AND RELEASE DATES?

www.popcorn.co.uk
Gives a British perspective on latest releases and gossip, plus full listings for local cinemas.
www.corona.bc.ca/films/filmlistings.html
A complicated, vast site which gives the inside track on forthcoming films. Impressively accurate.
www.filmreview.co.uk
A smartly-designed, user-friendly site focusing exclusively on current UK cinema releases.
www.filmworld.co.uk
News, trailers and events, as well as videos and DVDs to buy.

DECIDE WHAT TO SEE?

eonline.com
Impressively spot-on with reviews, and always good for gossip.
www.cinemachine.com
Retrieve reviews of your chosen films from an extensive archive.
aint-it-cool-news.com
Hundreds of reviews, as well as the most exclusive news. Beware the difficult-to-navigate format, though.
www.mrcranky.com
The amusing protagonist casts his critical eye over the latest releases – and decides they're rubbish.

FIND OFFICIAL FILM SITES?

uk.imdb.com
It cannot be stressed highly enough how comprehensive this site is.
www.foxmovies.com
Links to all 20th Century Fox releases.
www.movies.warnerbros.com
Umbrella site featuring WB's new films and long-forgotten classics.
www.universalstudios.com/universal_pictures/
All your favourites, in glorious Technicolor.

SEARCH FOR OBSCURE FILMS AND SCRIPTS?

www.script-o-rama.com
Read rejected scripts for well-known films and transcripts of obscure ones.
www.ohthehumanity.com
The worst movies of all time, lovingly detailed. *Teenage Catgirls in Heat*, anyone?
www.soton.ac.uk/~jwes197/main.htm
A massive database of movie 'bloopers' – that's mistakes to you and me. Good, clean fun.
www.losman.com/fod.htm
A site dedicated to gruesome death in films. Which is nice.

FIND A CINEMA?

www.warnervillage.co.uk
Now offering online booking for its 20-odd cinemas around the country.
cinema.scoot.co.uk
Sort of *Yellow Pages* for cinemas. Easiest to use of all online guides.
www.virgin.net/cinema/index.html
Excellent film and cinema locator. Simply enter a title and/or postcode to get locations and pithy reviews.
www.odeon.co.uk
Book online, or peruse the latest releases. A stylish and useful site.

BUY OR RENT VIDEOTAPES?

www.reel.com
Thirty percent savings off suggested US prices on DVDs. *Star Wars* store, secondhand videos and more.
www.blackstar.co.uk
UK's biggest online video store. Regular discounts, DVDs and charts to help you decide on your buy.
www.filmstore.co.uk
Odeon-run store with competitive prices on new releases.
www.videozone.co.uk
Games, software – and all the videos you can shake a stick at.

Find what's playing near you, or check out new releases, at the Warner site

FIND A NEWSGROUP?

alt.cult-movies
If it's obscure, or just plain bad, enthuse about it here.

JOIN A MAILING LIST?

Send an email with 'subscribe' in the body to ***majordomo@lists.xmission.com*** for movie news and chat.

GET CHATTING?

www.teenmovies.org
Discuss the glut of new high-school movies – including the rash of Shakespearean rewrites – here.

The Video Graveyard

www.geocities.com/Hollywood/4814/index.html ★★★★

'Welcome to The Video Graveyard,' as Bela Lugosi might have said but almost certainly didn't. Here is the home of the 'Attack of the 50ft WebRing' and a site proud to associate itself with the good, the bad and the wretched of the movie world. As you might expect from a site that launched a thousand other sites, there's a comprehensive collection of sounds, pictures, links and reviews that combine to make it a must-see for fans.

Wild Picture

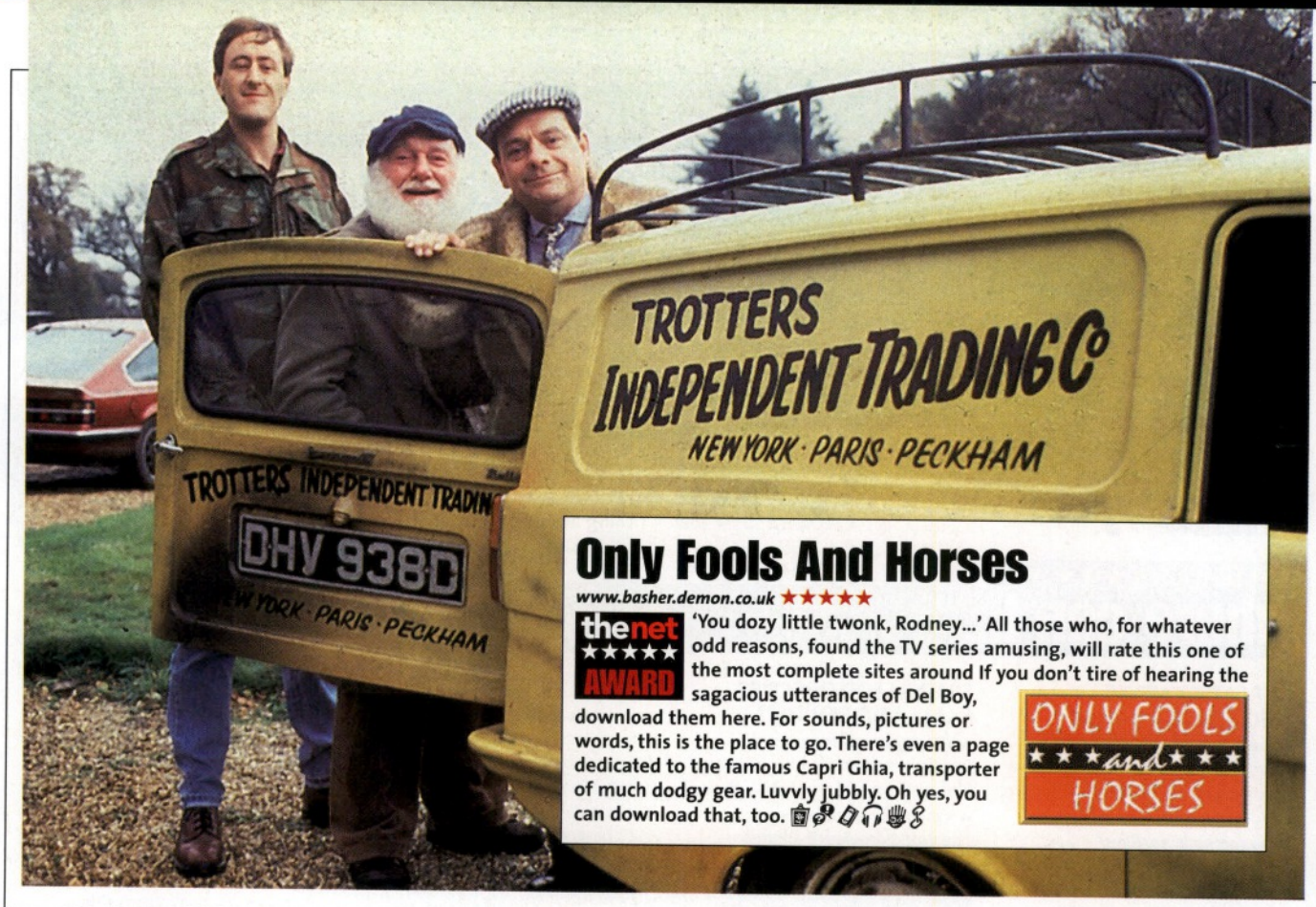
www.europa.com/~mholcomb/wildpic/ ★★★

Not one, not two, not even three but *four* incredible B-movie fanzines in one site, each dedicated to the ASTOUNDING! The STRANGE! And the WEIRD! Please do not adjust your Web browser; this site exalts 'the cinema of limitations' (clever-dick for B-movie, we presume). Read detailed analyses of great Mexican horror films or find out why 'Mars Hates Women'.

The greenhouse effect: turn your back and look what happens

WORDS: CHRISTOPHER HADLEY; PICTURES: KOBAL, REX

DIARY **8 October Bowfinger – a film about a bad director making a bad movie – opens in UK cinemas nationwide** ***www.bowfinger.com***



Only Fools And Horses

www.basher.demon.co.uk ★★★★★

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

'You dozy little twonk, Rodney...' All those who, for whatever odd reasons, found the TV series amusing, will rate this one of the most complete sites around If you don't tire of hearing the sagacious utterances of Del Boy, download them here. For sounds, pictures or words, this is the place to go. There's even a page dedicated to the famous Capri Ghia, transporter of much dodgy gear. Luvvly jubbly. Oh yes, you can download that, too.

ONLY FOOLS and HORSES

We will zay zis only once

BRIT SITCOMS Celebrate the best of British comedy over the Web. Hold on to your sides

oCafé René

www.coldcut.com/video/aa/ ★★★★★

In *'Allo 'Allo*, French café owner René had his scantily clad waitresses fawning while he fondled, and we loved it. Dedication to the show is evident in this constantly updated site. Relive the good old days, read complete episode guides and download 'Leesten very carefully, I will say zis...' If it also had 'good moaning' it would be perfect.

Dad's Army

www.comedyzone.beeb.com/dadsarmy/ ★★★

One of the finest sitcoms ever written revolved around a bunch of the old and infirm wrangling over their plans to repel the Hun. Whichever one was your favourite character, the Beeb's site has a corner for you: you'll find facts, sounds and video footage. Postcards feature Clive Dunn choking on a pint.

Grace Brothers

www.clever.net/rice/www/aybs.shtml ★★★

Are You Being Served? had phenomenal ratings and even now the cult grows – the repeats garner high viewing figures. The store itself, Grace Brothers, is lovingly recreated here: like the workers, you can waste real time in the canteen as you gossip in chat rooms, download 'I'm free' or read scripts.

Tony Hancock Appreciation Society

www.ncl.ac.uk/~nnac/index2.html ★★★★

The creators of *Hancock's Half Hour*, Ray Galton and Alan Simpson, have graciously allowed fans to post as much material as possible on to the Web. This site has certainly taken advantage of that and maintains a healthy reverence for the incomparable star character.

Oui, it's hard to resist *'Allo 'Allo*

Dad's Army: the thoroughly British, uniformed contender for funniest WW2 farce

THE SOPRANOS

Hitting the high notes with crime

'I don't sing for no-one'

As Triad and Yardie gang incidents increase, it seems that our fascination for mob brutality is as strong as ever. Musician Tricky is said to have used famous mobsters as backing on his new album, while the cult status of the Kray brothers, 'Mad' Frankie Fraser and others grows ever hotter. Now it's the turn of C4 to add to the equation with its series *The Sopranos* (official HBO site *www.hbo.com/sopranos/*). The lead character – whose real name, James Gandolfini, even sounds apt for the role – is an overweight, balding mobster whom women find strangely attractive. Note to impressionable male viewers: this only happens in the movies.

Basil & cardy: equally absurd?

Episode guides, photographs and merchandise fill the pages as neatly and tightly as a Hancock script.

The Perrin Page

rampages.onramp.net/~jisham/Reginald_Perrin.htm ★★★

Rising Damp was good but *The Fall and Rise of Reginald Perrin* was the ultimate Leonard Rossiter vehicle. Downloading the signature tune will take you back to when mother-in-law was a hippo, Corrie's Audrey was attractive and English comedy was funny. For a full episode guide go to ***www.xnet.com/~djk/FallandRiseofReginaldPerrin_2.shtml***

Porridge

www.phill.co.uk/comedy/porridge/intro.html ★★★

Thanks to the wisdom of the BBC, *Porridge* is currently undergoing a revival on BBC1. Those who missed it the first, second or even third time round should make the effort: Norman Stanley Fletcher is the lag to watch. If you haven't been in on it before, catch up at this site by reading the episode guides – and be captivated by Ronnie Barker's incredible talent.

Steptoe and Son

www.angelfire.com/md/betel/steptoe.html ★★★

There are few dirty old men, no rags and no bones here – the site is on the wordy side. After all, there's a lot to pack in – the series ran for no less than 12 years. Glance through the 'vinyl section' and discover failed tracks like *Choppers for sale – The economist*. If that doesn't satisfy you, the in-depth biogs and episode guides should.

Unofficial Guide to Fawlty Towers

www.btinternet.com/~c.tomlinson/fawlty1.html ★★★★

Enter a virtual *Fawlty Towers*, sign the guest book and head to the first floor for chats, messages or a quiz. Sadly, no pictures of the 'Flowery Twats' hotel sign, but you can order 'Sybil the piranha fish' or 'I'm from Barcelona' birthday cards. Only 12 episodes were ever made – interestingly, there were only 14 editions of *Bagpuss*, that other seminal classic – but the info here is vast and could be communicated to even the most Manuel-like of brains.

Fletcher & co: best of all TV's lovable rogues

Yes Minister

bennett.tvheaven. com/ymguide.htm ★★★

The sort of ministryspeak that filled each episode of both *Yes Minister* and *Yes Prime Minister* is scattered throughout the site. Research the longest sentences the characters ever uttered or explanations of the three different types of 'Civil Service Silence'. The show, with its gentle but cutting political satire, is accurately represented here and the site conveys a healthy taste of its wit and humour. Wonder if life at Number 10 is still like this now Tony and Cherie are in residence...

best TV sites ★★★★★

where can I...

FIND UK SOAP SITES?

www.bbc.co.uk/eastenders/
Gaze through the 'Walford Cam' and chat to fellow *EastEnders* devotees.
www.coronationstreet.co.uk
Biographies, gossip, recent events, story so far and general Corrie info.
www.merseytv.com/brookside.html
Part of Phil Redmond's empire – you can link to *Hollyoaks*.
www.pearsontv.com/neighbours/
See what happens on *Neighbours* months before the rest of the UK.

FIND PROGRAMME GUIDES FOR POPULAR SHOWS?

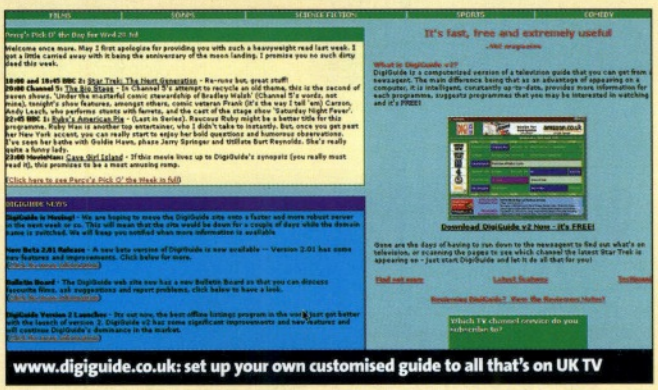
www.nbc.com/tvcentral/shows/frasier/episodeguide/guide11.html
Not quite up to date but the most complete episode guide for *Frasier*.
web.ukonline.co.uk/martin.whale/
UK-based *Friends* site: episode guide and scripts from every show.
www.snpp.com/episodeguide.html
Every *Simpsons* episode ever made, with great downloads and detail.
beef-cake.com/taison/episode.htm
At-a-glance guide to *South Park*, with pictures of favourite moments.

LOOK UP MY FAVOURITE TV PERSONALITY?

www.geocities.com/Hollywood/Lot/8198/actress.htm
If you have a favourite TV actress, go to the TV Actress Directory.
www.pathfinder.com/people/web/index.html
People Magazine's speciality is B-list celebs: find your favourite here.
www.nyt.co.uk /celebrit.htm
Book a Brit celebrity – eg Eddie 'the Eagle' Edwards – for your event.
www.jerryspringer.com
Everyone's favourite talk show host has a surprisingly uncontentious Web presence. 'My Wife is Sleeping with My Aunt,' indeed.

BUY TV MEMORABILIA?

www.tvtoys.com
Pick up TV toys, books – the lot. Most should find a favourite here, including a Bionic Woman board game. Quite possibly heaven.
www.universal-studios.net/movieprops.html
Log in and head for the shop. How about a Jean-Luc Picard doll for a mere $35?
www.comedycentral.com/store/
Pick up your favourite *South Park* toys direct from the States.


www.digiguide.co.uk: set up your own customised guide to all that's on UK TV

www.ctvb.com
Mail order memorabilia including classic books, guides and mags.

FIND TV NEWS AND INFO?

tv.cream.org
One of the best resources on the Net for long-dead shows.
www.digiguide.co.uk
Customised guide to British telly, with schedules and reviews.
www.bigglethwaite.com
Everything you could ever need to know about British TV online.
www.ultimatetv.com
American-influenced site with links to current shows, gossip and info. Great 'Ask Mr TV' facility.

WATCH TV?

www.bloomberg.com/products/tv.html
Breaking news and top business stories, 24 hours a day.
www.beeb.com
Watch news or programme snippets in RealVideo.
www.broadcast.com
If it's happening live, it'll be listed somewhere in Broadcast.
www.livetv.wwitv.com
Connects you to more than 100 live TV stations from over 40 countries.

FIND A NEWSGROUP?

rec.arts.tv.uk.misc
Keen on British TV? Then go here.

JOIN A MAILING LIST?

Get all the American TV gossip you could possibly handle. Send an email marked subscribe to ***tvworld@egroups.com***

GET CHATTING?

www.delphi.com/britcom/chat/
Ooh, that's a nice pussy. Join in camp banter in the Britcom chat room.

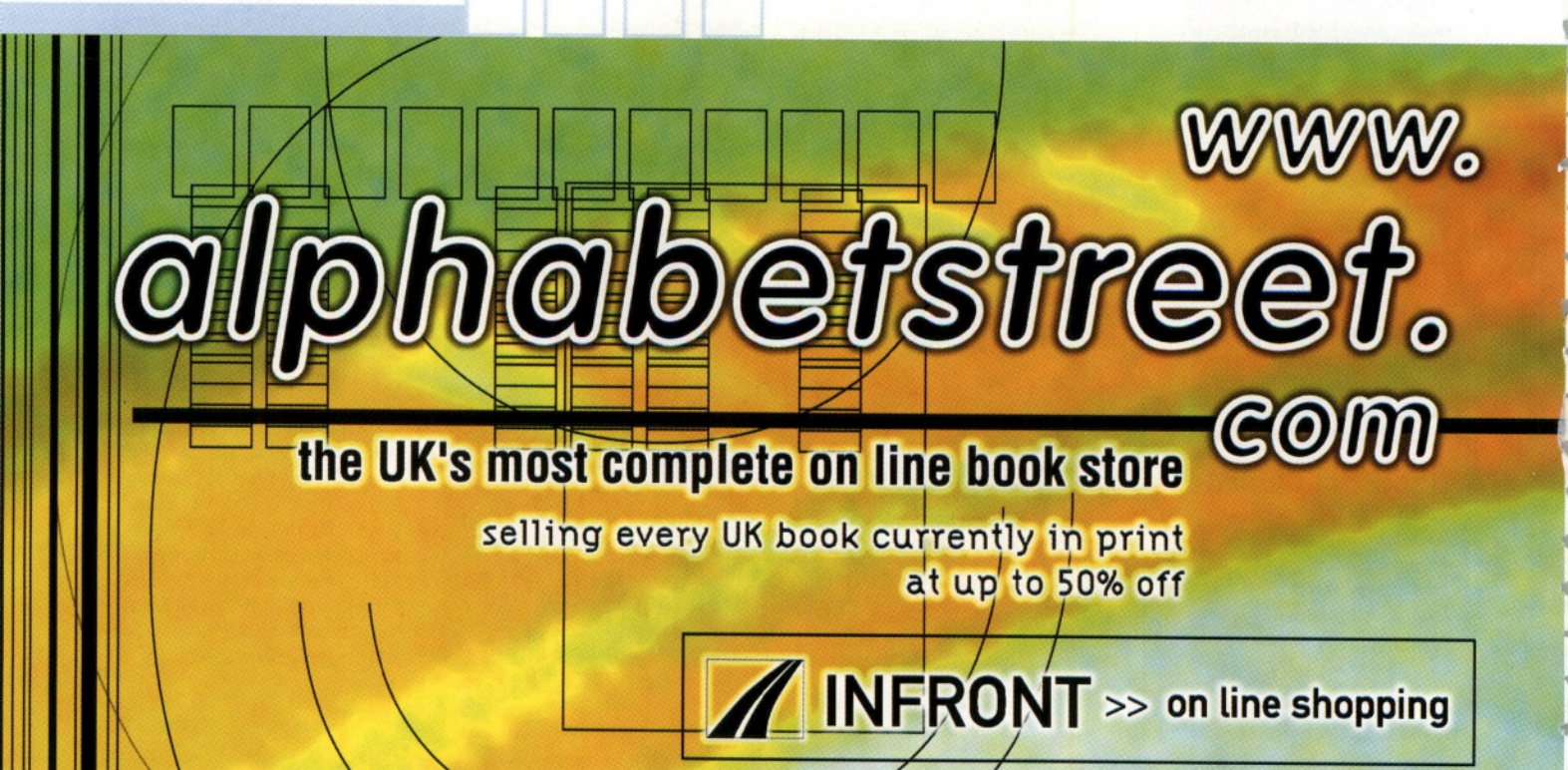
Looking for more television sites? Turn to Need To Know on page 108

WORDS: NOAM FRIEDLANDER;PICTURES: REX, SIPA PRESS, THAMES TV

www.
dvdstreet.
com

the UK's greatest on line DVD store

selling every region 2 DVD at up to 50% off
free delivery in the UK


www.
alphabetstreet.
com
the UK's most complete on line book store
selling every UK book currently in print
at up to 50% off
INFRONT >> on line shopping

ANETStation.com

www.advice-net.com ★★★★★

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

The throbbing pulse of music beats in the strangest places – like Antarctica, for example (at least with penguins as neighbours you'll never have to turn the volume down). ANETStation is the home of the world's most remote Net radio station, maintained by Australian scientists and blaring out an eclectic selection of music with a particular jazz and blues bent. Check out the Webcam – 'If it's dark, remember it's the South Pole' – and the accommodation guide if you fancy a (chilly) visit.

Alaska calling

OUTPOSTS Far away can be close at hand, thanks to the Net. And these stations are very far away

100Jamz

www2.100jamz.com ★★★★

Pumping reggae and dance blasts from the Bahamas' first privately-owned radio station, which also handily doubles up as an ISP. Other features include a regular gospel slot, manic announcers (imagine a Caribbean Norman Wisdom and you're not too far off the mark) and the in-house Spank Band.

MIX 103.1

www.kmxs.com ★★★

It seems that Alaskans (turn left at Canada and don a scarf) like the same sort of stuff we do music-wise – if Sheryl Crow and Alanis are your bag, that is. Plenty of laughs to be had from the varied audio clips archived here: top of the list is the Breakfast Show with its on-air makeovers and prank calls to a poor frozen farmer in the middle of nowhere.

Fatboy always tuned in for Zoe

Radio Nepal

www.catmando.com/news/radio-nepal ★★★★

'This one's going out to all the sherpas in the house...' Yep, there's something for everyone from this nifty little station, broadcast from the mountains of Nepal. Local and Western music sits side by side with drama and news, while the site itself explains the locality and the background of the station in impressive depth. It's a darn site more fun than Chris Evans of a morning.

Vatican City Radio

www.wrn.org/vatican-radio ★★★★

The Vatican City – little more than a large town in deepest Italy, if truth be told – has but one claim to fame: the Pope lives there. As such, most of the hourly news on this site tends to revolve around the Pope in some way or another: from his reaction to major world events to news of what he ate for breakfast. It's entertaining nonetheless, but why don't they simply stick his Holiness behind the wheels of steel and have done with it?

best radio sites ★★★★★

where can I...

FIND A STATION TO SUIT MY TASTES?

realguide.real.com

RealNetworks offers a definitive list of online radio stations, as well as the software with which to listen to them – all dead handy.

www.broadcast.com/radio

Those Broadcast boys come up trumps again, with what must at present count as the definitive guide to Internet radio.

FIND A STATION ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD?

www.radiodirectory.com

Wherever you want to tune in, this well-organised directory of stations and associated services should help you. Over 6000 links.

www.ontheair.com

Links to all sorts of music and talk stations, plus reviews and picks of the best.

CUSTOMISE MY PLAYLIST?

www.imagineradio.com

Set up a channel to play your very own choice of music, or listen to the hundreds already online.

www.spinner.com

Vote for your favourite tunes on the Spinner playlist. Plenty of eclectic channels for every taste.

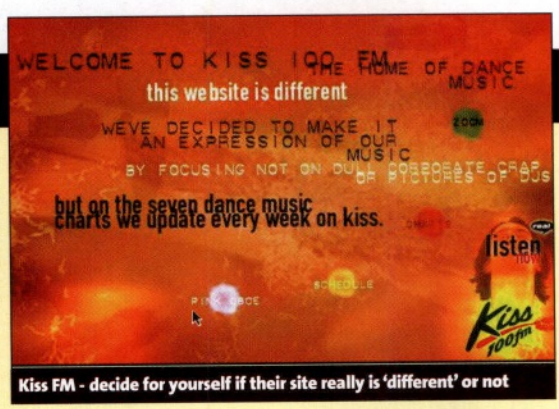
FIND SOME PUMPING DANCE TUNES?

www.kissfm.co.uk

The dance station with the silly ads puts its playlist online.

www.thewomb.com

Extremely popular Detroit station which broadcasts dance tunes exclusively over the Web.


WELCOME TO KISS 100 FM
THE HOME OF DANCE MUSIC
this website is different
WE'VE DECIDED TO MAKE IT AN EXPRESSION OF OUR MUSIC
but on the seven dance music charts we update every week on kiss.
listen
Kiss 100fm

Kiss FM - decide for yourself if their site really is 'different' or not

LISTEN TO SOME TALK?

www.fjackie.com

Fan site dedicated to controversial shock jock Howard Stern, complete with sound files.

www.talk-radio.co.uk

The nationwide talk network now boasts Net-only sports broadcasts, along with schedules and presenter profiles.

FIND PAGES FOR MY FAVOURITE DJ?

cgi.bbc.co.uk/radio1/peel/index.html

Everything you could want to know about that exception among DJs, the non-egomaniac, non-motormouth, ever-subtle and lovably whimsical John Peel.

www.markradcliffe.co.uk

A labour of love for all fans of Radio 1 scallies Mark and Lard.

JOIN A MAILING LIST?

At *www.radio-on-the-internet.com*, select 'Update' to get each new Web radio station's details emailed to you as soon as it goes online.

WORDS: ROBERT JEFFERY

Dancing days

NEW RELEASES Gomez bring it on again, plus Public Enemy teach us not to believe the hype

Lopez in 'bloody good album bordering on classic' shock

Air

Premiers Symptomes **VIRGIN** ★★★

Where Daft Punk pound, fellow French house duo Air soothe – hence their album *Moon Safari* taking over Sade's mantle with the coffee-table set. This reissue of their legendary first three EPs shows the Air sound in its embryonic form, borrowing as much from Debussy as from the dance floor. One of them used to be an architect, you know...

www.airfrenchband.cjb.net

As eclectic as the band themselves, this site hides its many gifts behind a strange, tiled façade. Enjoy.

Air make a bid for shampoo ad stardom

All Seeing I

Pickled Eggs & Sherbet **EARTH** ★★★★

Sheffield's finest have a gift for the unexpected – a version of their hit *And The Beat Goes On* appears on the otherwise dreadful Britney Spears album. And this debut is no less bizarre, featuring collaborations with Tony Christie, Phil Oakley, Babybird and Jarvis Cocker. It sounds not unlike a rediscovered *Now That's What I Call Sheffield* album from 1987, brought up to date by modern production and a dark veneer depicting the seedier side of their home city. All we need now is for ABC to reform. Oh God, they have...

www.ozemail.com.au/~renhoek/

In the absence of a site dedicated to the I themselves, revel in Human League glorious history.

Arab Strap

Elephant Shoe **GO BEAT** ★★★★

Even by the standards of Glaswegian drunks, Arab Strap hit the Buckfast a little too heavily. And their music has a sense of doomed melancholy you can only acquire with sclerosis of the liver. Imagine Irvine Welsh narrating tales of doomed love over tinny drum-beats and off-key guitars. It's not pretty, but it is compulsive.

www.arabstrap.freeserve.co.uk Strum along with the guitar chords, check out the latest events north of the border or chat with fellow Strappers.

Jennifer Lopez

On The 6 **COLUMBIA** ★★★★

This should be tawdry nonsense – except for Kathy from *Emmerdale*, actresses doing the 'singing thang' don't have a good track record. But this is decent stuff: sweltering swingbeat anthems elevated to the heavens by Lopez's sultry vocals. Only a misjudged duet with oily Latinpop superstar Marc Anthony spoils an otherwise faultless debut and prevents *On The 6* being one of the soundtracks to the summer. Can I have a date now? Please...?

Public Enemy: unhappy at cabbie's refusal to go south of the River

ALBUM OF THE MONTH

Gomez *Liquid Skin*

HUT ★★★★★

When Gomez bagged the Mercury Music Prize, most people's reaction was probably 'Go-who?' But this brilliant successor to *Bring It On* sees them bringing their unique fusion of blues, folk and lo-fi electronica to a mass audience. It should be a mess, but the mixture's held together by Ben Ottewell's savagely growling vocals – a little like Tom Waits deprived of his Listerine. The kind of trad-rock masterpiece even dads will like 'for the car'.

www.jbingham.freeserve.co.uk **Nifty little unofficial site.**

Gig and Festival Guide

OCTOBER If you're bored by *Ally McBeal*, why not catch some live music?

The Beta Band: 'a load of crap,' they say

ALL TOMORROW'S PARTIES

A three-day indie festival in a Butlin's holiday camp, so if the music's no good, you can always play crazy golf. Bands include Stereolab, Tindersticks and The High Llamas.

www.elektra.com/retro/stereolab/index.html

17-19 September Camber Sands Holiday Centre, near Rye, Sussex

THE BETA BAND

Expect all manner of strangeness from the outfit who dismissed their own debut album as 'a load of crap.'

20 September Brighton Paradox
21 September Portsmouth Pyramids
22 September Bristol Anson Rooms
24 September Liverpool L2
25 September Glasgow Barrowlands
26 September Newcastle University
28 September Manchester Ritz

www.beta-band.freeserve.co.uk

FEEDER

Fun-loving metal from hairy Cornwall baboons who prefer surfing to rehearsing.

16 September London Brixton Academy

www.feederweb.com

MOBY

He started out in techno, moved into grunge and is now reinventing himself as a hip-hop groovemaster. Just don't expect him to play the James Bond theme.

21-22 September London Scala

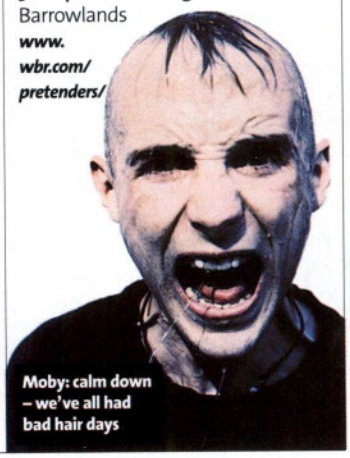
www.moby.org

PRETENDERS

Before the reverence gets out of hand, just remember that Chrissie Hynde used to be married to Jim '*Belfast Child*' Kerr.

27 September London Shepherd's Bush Empire
30 September Glasgow Barrowlands

www.wbr.com/pretenders/



Moby: calm down – we've all had bad hair days

jenniferlopez.toocool.com Of course – as this site proves – Ms Lopez's growing popularity has nothing whatsoever to do with her looks.

Public Enemy

There's A Poison Goin' On **PIAS ★★**

Oh dear. Public Enemy finally get over the charges of anti-Semitism and then they go and invite Professor Griff back into the band and craft an ill-judged track called *Swindlers Lust*. This is one of their dullest collections, and the packaging's so cheap they've misspelt the word 'millennium' on the cover. Ignore this farrago and search out *Fear Of A Black Planet*.

www.public-enemy.com See the site that started the fuss. Downloads of PE faves are still available, along with plenty of anti-corporate rhetoric.

Scritti Politti

Anomie & Bonhomie **VIRGIN ★★★★**

Green Gartside, the soft-voiced Scritti crooner, is a tricky character. His band recorded some of the most gorgeous saccharine pop of the '80s but they called themselves after the works of an Italian Marxist and had hits with titles like *Jacques Derrida*. This album is no less perplexing – but in a world filled with S Club bloody 7, intelligent gems like *Brushed With Oil, Dusted With Powder* are even more welcome.

www.doubt-beat.com/taliesin/AREAS/sp/ Yes, there are some dedicated souls out there keeping the dream alive. Try here, or the official site at ***www.scrittipolitti.co.uk***

Tindersticks: life's a beach

Tindersticks

Simple Pleasure **ISLAND ★★★**

They might have a singer who sounds like a monged-out Popeye, but there's something oddly affecting about the whisky-sodden melancholia of the Tindersticks, John Peel stalwarts and long-time indie favourites . And here they even show a previously disguised sense of humour, with a cover of Odyssey's 1980 soft-soul standard *If You're Looking For A Way Out*. Mostly it's sad music for sad bastards, but at least they have a sense of style about it.

huizen.dds.nl/~totos/tinder.htm Neat introduction to all things Tinderstick-related, compiled by a Dutch fan. Among items of interest are audio and video snippets, and a suitably winsome lyrics collection.

Various

Eyes Wide Shut **OST WARNER SUNSET/REPRISE ★★★★**

Most of Stanley Kubrick's films have backed their stunning visuals with memorable music – just think of the swirling waltzes in *2001* or the improbable hit *I Want To Be Your Drill Instructor* from *Full Metal Jacket*. And *Eyes Wide Shut* is just as intriguing, veering from the country ballads of Chris Isaak to jazz standards and Jocelyn Pook's eerie soundscapes. A slightly more diverting collection than the ape grunts on *George Of The Jungle*.

www.eyeswideshut.com If you like the music, check out the film here, where you can download that steamy Tom and Nicole trailer. Anyone else getting sweaty?

Various

Rogue Trader **OST COLUMBIA ★★★**

What better accompaniment to a film about swindler Nick Leeson than Barratt Strong's *Money (That's What I Want)*? It's actually a pretty dull movie, if the truth be told (no wonder – David Frost produced it) but the soundtrack is splendid, featuring the Manics' *La Tristessa Durera* and Travis' *All I Want To Do Is Rock*. As for what these songs have to do with Leeson's tale – or what resemblance Ewan McGregor bears to the errant banker – your guess is as good as ours.

www.ex.ac.uk/~RDavies/arian/scandals/ More financial scandals than you can shake a Nick at. Lose millions, peeps.

CLASSIC ALBUM

Jeff Buckley

Grace **COLUMBIA (1994)**

Buckley: didn't want to go

Of all the famous rock deaths, Jeff Buckley's in 1996 was among the most genuinely sad. As the *NME* headline put it, 'He didn't hate himself, he didn't want to die.' *Grace*, Buckley's only proper studio album, showed his vast potential, his voice floating high like ether on *Hallelujah* or plaintively imploring in *Lover, You Should've Come Over*. The many Web sites devoted to Buckley – son of cult folk singer Tim – still seem to be in a mood of deep disbelief about his passing. Listening to the howling *Dream Brother*, you can certainly understand why.

www.jeffbuckley.com Official tribute to the much-mourned rocker, with messages from family and friends, and a reviews archive.

PICTURES: RETNA

WORDS: JOHN MULLEN;

Frank Sinatra Shrine

www.nj.com/sinatra ★★★★★

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

Ol' Blue Eyes, as we all now know, was far from perfect. 'His talent is no excuse for bad manners,' Sammy Davis Jr once said, 'and it does not give you the right to step on people.' Still, if you'd rather ignore that side of his character, make this shrine your site of choice. It's a multimedia cornucopia of goodies, covering anecdotes, photos and a RealVideo documentary of our Frank.

When Frank asked for some topless lovelies, this wasn't what he meant

Lounge lizards

CROONERS The Rat Pack's back in fashion after a summer of easy listening – use the Net to tune in to the high notes of Frank, Dino, Sammy and co

Tony Bennett.net

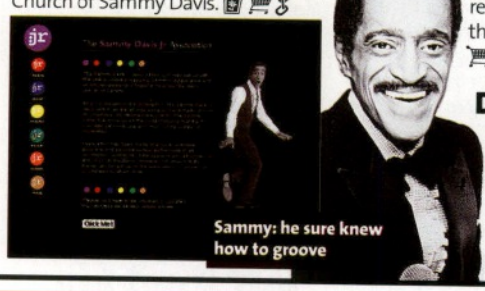
www.tonybennett.net ★★★

The only Rat-Packer yet to join the great casino in the sky, Tony's still loosing his larynx in sold-out venues around the world. His official site offers a healthy biography and some tour dates, but remains no more than an average online presence for the generation-bridging crooner.

Sammy Davis Jr

www.sammydavis-jr.com ★★★

Sammy was the coolest member of the Rat Pack and his legacy is kept alive by a lively bunch of British devotees on this site. Learn more through an archive of articles or buy photos. Or visit ***www.geocities.com/CollegePark/8182/samtro.htm*** to worship at the tongue-in-cheek Church of Sammy Davis.



Sammy: he sure knew how to groove

Dean Martin Fan Center

www.deanmartinfancenter.com ★★★★★

The kiddies are bopping to Dino again, thanks to the release of a groovy little greatest hits package – and they'll want to explore his official fan site, a neat little guide to the Martin phenomenon. His magic, his laydees and, most importantly, his music are all explained here, along with some media clips and links. It's all as relaxed and louche as the man himself.

Dino's Lodge

www.ualberta.ca/~mmalowan/dino/ ★★★

From the legendary Sammy Mazola Jr Foundation For The Arts comes a '100-proof tribute' to Dino – Sinatra's trustworthy sidekick, whose image has been revived by the recent greatest hits set and inevitable dance remix. You'll find impressive downloads, images and sound files. The filmography is as comprehensive as they come, too.

Franksville – Sinatra's Kind of Town

cinepad.com/sinatra/franksville_road.htm ★★★★

As well as a superb, review-packed discography with links to shops, this site has the 'Frank-ylizer', which lets you select a Sinatra album to suit your mood. Answer a few questions on your lifestyle and drinking habits and up pops the optimum opus for you. The Hall of Shame strikes a nice balance, giving some perspective on the man's pronounced personality flaws. Effortlessly cool.

there's no better way to buy any CD...

Rat Pack Home Page

www.rat-pack.net ★★★★

'Listen up you hepster wannabes' is how you're greeted on this strange little home page aimed at 'crooners and lounge lizards'. Memories and links abound on the packed site, which merits more than one visit for an in-depth exploration. Links to CD Universe are in place to satiate your live music needs – and you can view Sinatra's FBI file.

Sinatra Tribute

www.geocities.com/Pipeline/2325/index.html ★★★

Cluttered tribute to Ol' Blue Eyes. Tough to navigate, due to reams of text and pics, but worth the effort for a smokin' collection of MIDI files, some intimate family pictures and a movie guide. Frank's old pals Dino and Sammy pop up from time to time. See also ***www.blue-eyes.com*** for a handy alternative.

Dean (left) and Harry: who's cooler, we wonder?

Official Harry Connick Jr Fan Page

www.connick.com

★★★★

In much the same way that some portray Guy Richie as the British Tarantino, so young Connick Jr was – in the early '90s – cast as the newest member of the Rat Pack, the natural heir to those who went before him. Unfortunately, his career seems subsequently to have floundered faster than you can say 'Summer season at Butlin's, anyone?' A devoted few have maintained an excellent site with pics, clips and chat, however – which may be rather more than he deserves. What do they find to chat about, we wonder?

This Is Sinatra

members.aol.com/artanis103/sinatra.html ★★★★★

Gateway to the 'Ring-a-Ding-World' of Sinatra. Within this blue-eyed portal you'll find mailing lists, lyrics, filmographies, discographies and links galore (though no dodgy jokes about the deceased). A beautifully-presented Webzine ensures fresh content each month, while an interview archive makes this pretty much essential.

best music sites ★★★★★

where can I...

FIND OUT ABOUT MP3s?

www.mp3.com
Get started on the official site, with heaps of legal downloads.
mp3.lycos.com
Browse the world of MP3s using a comprehensive search engine.
www.mp3now.com
Vibrant portal for everything MP3.
mp3.box.sk
News and legal issues are tackled here, as is searching for legal tracks.

FIND A BAND SITE?

www.ubl.com
Make this the first stop on your quest, for its huge search engine.
www.bigmouth.co.uk
UK-specific site with 100s of links.
www.musicsearch.com
Find sites for artists or music-related services. Efficient & quick.
neumusic.com
Directory and search engine to seek out URLs or downloads.

WATCH LIVE CONCERTS OVER THE WEB?

www.liveonthenet.com
Does exactly what its URL suggests.
www.live-online.com
Features a 'modem moshpit' for hearing top bands.
www.mtv.com
The odd exclusive Webcast, as well as plenty of news and fun.
www.sonicnet.com
Good for news and links – great for live events and concerts.

VIEW THE LATEST NEWS AND REVIEWS?

www.rollingstone.com
The US publication, not the rock dinosaurs. Well written and reliable.
www.music365.co.uk
Sensible, enjoyable music features from the people behind Football365.
www.wallofsound.com
All the news you can shake a stick at, with reviews thrown in.
www.dotmusic.com
Well-organised British site for all your rock and pop news and links.

FIND GIG LISTINGS?

www.sceneone.co.uk/s1/gigs
Easy-to-use gig guide from Scene One's entertainment spectacular.
www.tourdates.com
Search for tours around the world.
www.liveconcerts.com
Ace database of live Net broadcasts.
www.gigsandtours.com
Find any UK concert – courtesy of SJM Concerts.

BUY TICKETS FOR GIGS?

www.ticketmaster.co.uk
Tickets for any live gig, as well as theatre, classical concerts and more.

Find a gig anywhere with Tourdates

www.aloud.com
Relatively new and snazzy site offering a nationwide gig guide.
www.lastminute.com
Excellent bargains on late tickets.
www.ticketzone.co.uk
The biggest events offered online, with links to home pages.

FIND A NEWSGROUP?

alt.culture.lounge
Kick back with fellow easy listeners.

JOIN A MAILING LIST?

Online chart, decided by email votes. Send your current personal top 15 tracks to ***hits@softdisk.com***

GET CHATTING?

The chat at ***www.rat-pack.net*** takes some beating, for both content and volume.

Looking for more music sites? Turn to Need To Know on page 108

WORDS: ROBERT JEFFERY; PICTURES: RETNA, REX

boxman.co.uk
music by mouse

War correspondent

Find out what's going on in
the trenches of global rugby:
read our front-line reporter,
Martin Johnson,
exclusively on rugby365.

England and Lions' captain,
Johnson, leads an international team -
through mud, sweat and tears -
to bring you live scores
and the latest stories.

Coverage is comprehensive.
One moment you're on the training
ground with Nick Mallett,
South African coach.
The next you're in the bar,
talking World Cup '99 tactics
with Dion O'Cuinneagain,
captain of Ireland.

If your world is oval,
this is your site.

www.rugby365.com

RUGBY 365

365 Corporation plc

South Africa's tactics in the line-out were suspect, to say the least

Trying times

RUGBY UNION A month of scrums and rucking good competition – it's time for the Rugby World Cup

Haka! A Site for New Zealand Rugby

www.haka.co.nz ★★★★

'I die. I die. I live. I live. I die. I die. I live. I live. This is the hairy man who fetched the sun and caused it to shine again. One upward step. Another upward step. An upward step, another. The sun shines.' Hmm, the haka doesn't quite have the same effect when it's translated into English, does it?

Irish Rugby Football Union

www.irfu.ie ★★★

Some would call it dull, uninspiring and lacking in imagination. So much for the quality of the team's play at the moment. As for the site, although it looks quite nice, the content does little to avoid being tarred with the same brush. Only dyed-in-the-wool Irish supporters will be dedicated enough to get much out of paying a visit.

Official Rugby World Cup site

www.rwc99.com ★★★

Much as Jonah Lomu strolls around on the wing before blasting into action when he eventually gets his hands on the ball, official sites often only spring into life when a tournament starts... which is to say that there was little to get excited about here when we visited. You may enjoy the live video chats with various rugby personalities.

All-Black magic: Lomu on a run

The RFU

www.rfu.com ★★★★

The home of English rugby on the Net is a classy effort with a huge range of content. Funnily enough, though, we could find no mention of the misdemeanours of that Mr Dallaglio – even his personal profile still has him as the unsullied, inspirational national captain. Nothing like sticking your head in the sand and pretending everything's hunky-dory, eh?

England: not a sniff of scandal

Rugby Rugby.com

www.rugbyrugby.com ★★★

A superb news service is the front row of this site – and it's backed up with message boards carrying discussions on the latest results and happenings. The real sense of community is supported by a Match Maker service for clubs trying to find opposition for friendly games. And you can even pick up your club tie, football or T-shirt at the online shop. Dandy.

Scrum.com

www.scrum.com ★★★★

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

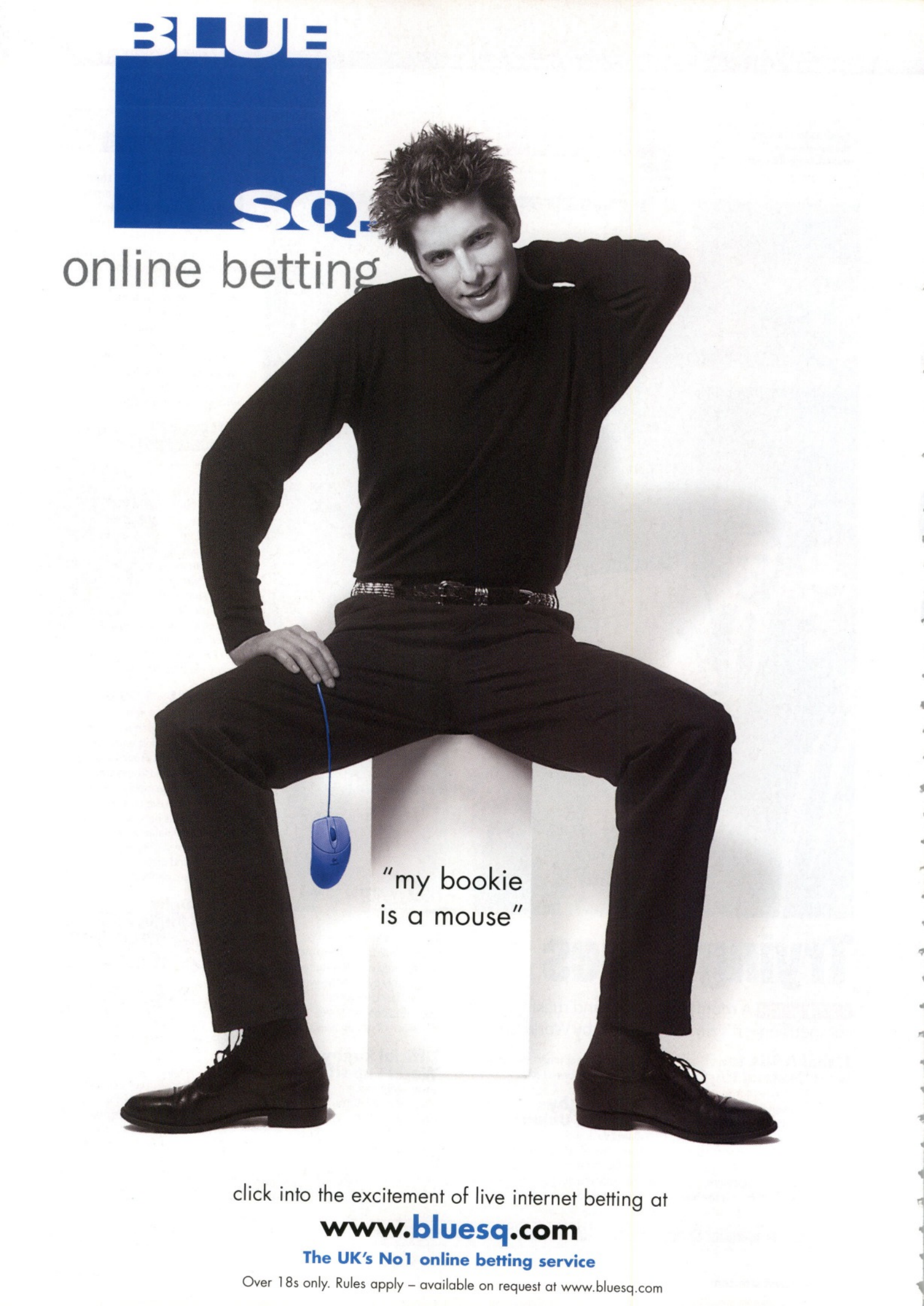
More links than a suit of chainmail and enough news and results to keep the most anal of rugby fans happy. The site carries five columnists, ranging from John Inverdale to ex-England player Mick 'the Munch' Skinner, offering pearls of wisdom such as, 'The Welsh served up so many surprises on the way to the try line that Cilla Black would have had kittens.' There's no arguing with writing like that.

scrum.com The Premier Rugby Website

WORDS: PAUL WINSLOW; PICTURES: ALLSPORT

DIARY 9 September British Masters Golf 11 September Racing, St Leger 1 October Rugby Union World Cup starts

www.sportlive.net


BLUE
SQ.
online betting
"my bookie
is a mouse"
click into the excitement of live internet betting at
www.bluesq.com
The UK's No1 online betting service
Over 18s only. Rules apply – available on request at www.bluesq.com

Rugby World Cup 99

www.rugbynet.co.nz ★★

A stunning lack of originality is in evidence here. The site's going to be useful once the tournament starts, to help you keep up with the results and news. Until then, it's hardly worth filling your browser window with. But bookmark it anyway in preparation for the big kick-off.

Scottish Rugby Union

www.sru.org.uk ★★★

A mix of news, results, squad details and information on the clubs. Scottish rugby is undergoing something of a renaissance these days but, unfortunately, that's hardly reflected in the standard of the site. There's no shortage of information here but it cries out for an injection of something extra to make it worth returning to.

Sporting Life Rugby Union

www.sporting-life.com/rugby

★★★★

The news service is excellent, albeit unlikely to offer anything you can't get elsewhere. To make any great sporting occasion that bit more fun, though, it's nice to have a flutter – and that, of course, is where Sporting Life can help, with a link to the online betting zone. After all, turning a little cash into a lot of cash is the kind of conversion we all like.

RUGBY DITTIES

Sing low...

Rugby players have a fearsome reputation for consuming huge amounts of alcohol, singing raucous, rude songs and then showing their private parts to each other. When it comes to singing, the likes of

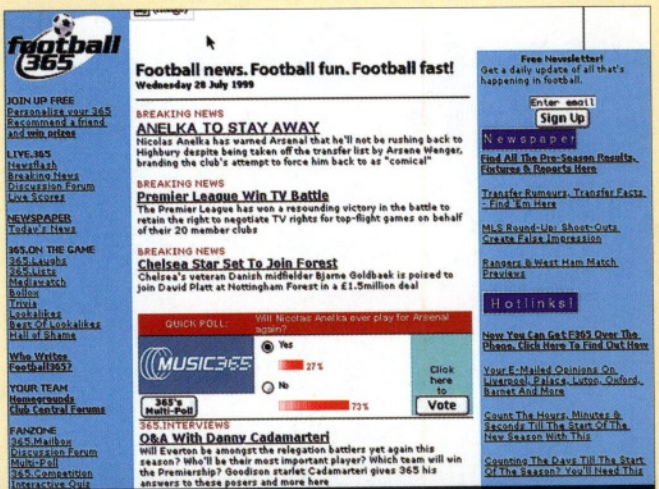
'Can't wait to get to the ribald ditties'

Swing Low, Sweet Chariot **often give way to songs with words that would make a big bald trooper's hair curl. Work through the sedate national songs then scroll down to learn some ribald ditties at *www.spintheweb.com/~jpardike/rugsong.htm*. If you're easily offended, though, keep clear.**

WORDS: PAUL WINSLOW; PICTURES: ALLSPORT

best sport sites ★★★★★

where can I...



Football365: all the news, all the laughs, all the scores, all the time. Simple as that

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espn.go.com

Fast scores from every sport, plus news with an American bias.

www.eurosport.com

As wide-ranging and useable as the satellite channel of the same name. Obscure sports are a speciality.

www.soccernet.com

Score flashes from all UK games, plus a newswire.

www.sporting-life.com

News, scores and betting advice from the paper of the same name.

FIND TOP FOOTBALL SITES?

www.football365.co.uk

Exciting, fast-improving daily paper with offbeat news and humour. Customised emails available.

www.footballnews.co.uk

Plenty of stats, plus a database of players and the latest headlines.

www.teamtalk.com

Premium-rate phone lines for your club are transferred to the Net – and they don't cost a penny.

www.soccerone.com

Keeps you up to date on most major European Leagues, and runs a predictions league to boot.

Find the site for you with SportSearch

FIND CLUB OR PLAYER SITES?

www.sportsearch.com

US-based directory for all sport.

www.sportfind.com

A sort of Yahoo! especially for sport, with directories for every need.

www.ukfootballpages.com

Every soccer site in existence, listed and reviewed.

www.cricinfo.com

Whatever your cricket needs, this huge portal will see to them. Hundreds of links, too.

FIND FIXTURES?

www.sportcal.co.uk/public/online.htm

Events and sponsors for five years.

www.athlete.com

Events guide with an athletics bias.

www.sportlive.net

Join the *Express* site for your own email sports diary.

www.digitaldiscounts.com/sports.html

Unexciting but extremely informative fixture guide.

FOLLOW EVENTS LIVE?

www.planetfootball.com

Hub site for English football clubs' RealAudio broadcasts.

www.lsmsports.com/fight.htm

The world's biggest boxing bouts online. Packs a punch.

www.broadcast.com/sports/soccer

From Derby County to the Jamaican national side in glorious RealAudio.

www.golfboxx.com

Every major tour event in RealAudio, plus an interactive 'Golf Doctor'.

PLACE AN ONLINE BET?

www.igindex.co.uk/sport.htm

Fixed-odds and spread betting, with live price updates.

www.williamhill.co.uk

Get British bookies' odds and place bets online. Reliable and popular.

www.bluesq.com

Register for user-friendly betting.

www.inter-bet.com

One of the oldest, most popular Net bookies. Easy to use and competitive.

FIND A NEWSGROUP?

rec.sport.rugby.union

Sure to be a hub for the World Cup.

JOIN A MAILING LIST?

Share tips and tricks for gambling online with fellow punters at ***www.bgsports.com***

GET CHATTING?

www.rwc99.com

Promises 'round table' discussions with rugby luminaries during the Rugby World Cup.

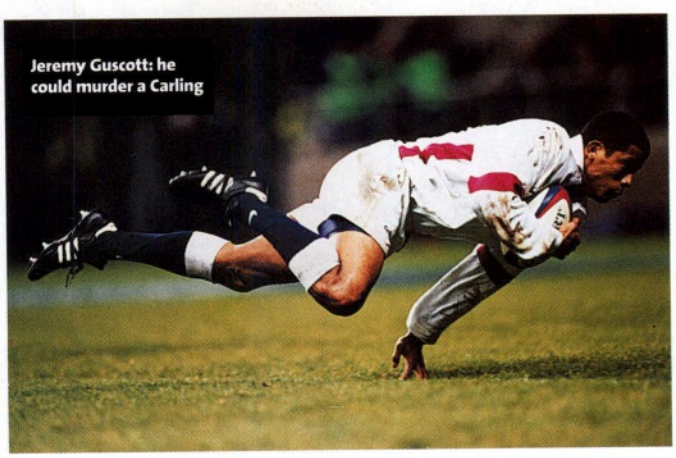
Looking for more sport sites? Turn to Need To Know on page 108

Welsh Rugby Union

www.wru.co.uk ★★★

With a new £126-million stadium and a team that's proving capable of stepping out of the shadows of its illustrious predecessors, Welsh rugby is at long last marching down the comeback road.

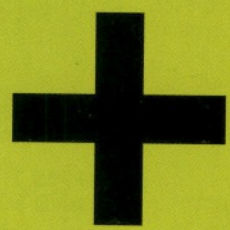
For any Welsh fans still pinching themselves after victory against the mighty South Africans – and maybe wondering if they can finally stop the neverending search for 'the next J P R Williams' – this is a place to celebrate. But will there still be a welcome in the hillsides come October? Probably not.



Jeremy Guscott: he could murder a Carling

www.ukplus.co.uk

Are you having fun on the Internet?



Find the best entertainment sites at ukplus.co.uk

If you're looking for serious fun, the Internet probably has more suggestions on where to find it than anything else on the planet. The downside is that not everything is everyone's idea of a good time. At UKPlus, every entertainment site we recommend has been checked out by responsible adults to be absolutely suitable, totally relevant, and huge, huge fun for everyone in Britain. Try UKPlus just for fun, and you'll stay with us for everything else we have to offer, too.

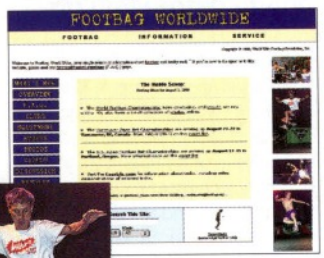
The best of the web, without the rest of the web.

Footbag Worldwide

www.footbag.org ★★★★★

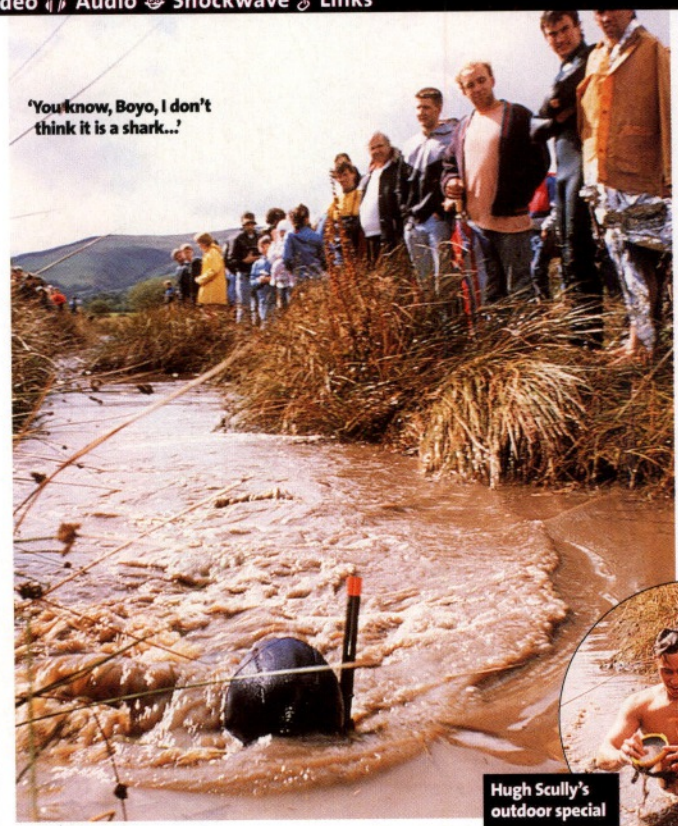
thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

Hacky Sack has long been the leisure activity of choice for effete urbanites. No American park is complete without a Kenneth or a Graeme enjoying a lunch-hour latte and a kickabout. But footbag – as it's affectionately known by aficionados – is also a competitive sport with its own championships and superstars:

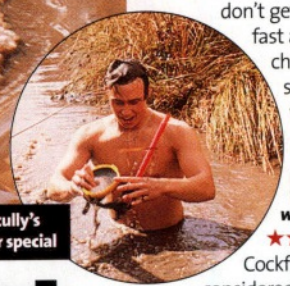


marvel at the pictures of the awesome Ken Schultz performing his 'famous reverse-sole'. And freestyle footbag features nubile young ladies called things like Brandi and Sherri juggling the tiny footballs to the slightly unedifying accompaniment of Ravel's Bolero. Not our bag, I'm afraid.

Yanks: always a laugh



'You know, Boyo, I don't think it is a shark...'



Hugh Scully's outdoor special

It's not cricket

DAFT SPORTS If you've given up on gut-barging, fear not – there's a whole world of weird sports to try

Bog Snorkelling

llanwrtyd-wells.powys.org.uk/bog.htm ★★

Being no good at sport, the Welsh have started inventing their own in the vain hope of actually winning something. Bog snorkelling – their latest effort – involves digging a sixty-yard trench, filling it with watered-down sheep shit and seeing who can flap through the fastest. The winner becomes World Champion until toxic shock sets in.

Lumberjack Guide

www.starinfo.com/ljguide/lumberjack.html ★★★

You'd think that *Monty Python* would have killed lumberjacking stone dead. Apparently not – timbersports enjoys an enthusiastic following in the States. Disciplines involve sawing through logs: in Stalin's gulags this was considered hard labour, but in modern-day America it has somehow become a spectator sport.

The Muni Pages

expert.cc.purdue.edu/~bymaster/muni ★★★

The unicycle is no longer the preserve of circus performers, itinerant street artists and daft students. High speed, downhill, off-road unicycling is all the rage on the US West Coast. You look stupid, don't get to go particularly fast and stand a good chance of sustaining serious head injuries when you fall off and hit a rock.

Pitmaster

www.pitmaster.com ★★

Cockfighting – a sport we considered outdated by the late Middle Ages – is still all the rage in the enlightened Deep South. Two scabby hens are put in a ring and peck at each other until one goes up to the great battery farm in the sky. That's entertainment, apparently. The good news is it's soon to be banned. Lots of pictures of young chaps in dungarees holding their cocks. Fnar fnar...

Clive Sinclair kept trying after the C5

best sport sites ★★★★★ where can I...

JOIN A TEAM?

www.sportlive.net

Check out the 'grassroots' section for links to hundreds of local teams.

www.golflink.com

Find a golf club or partner through the classified sections.

BUY ACCESSORIES ONLINE?

www.sportsconnection.co.uk

Shop online for sportswear, equipment and accessories.

www.sportspages.co.uk

Net bookshop specialising in sporting titles.

LEARN THE RULES?

www-uk.cricket.org

Cricket's home page explains the lbw rule for confused Americans.

www.referee.com

The men in black – you're certain to get your rule questions answered here. Just don't argue with what they tell you.

FIND A NEW SPORT?

www.sportszine.co.uk

Comprehensive, well-organised links to UK sites for everything from athletics to wrestling.

www.outdoors.co.uk

Useful information on hiking, hang-gliding and just about everything in between.

GET OFF THE COUCH?

www.ticketmaster.co.uk/sport

Online ticket ordering for all major UK sports events.

Pick up sporting tomes at www.sportspages.co.uk

www.premierswap.com

Claims to be an 'Internet market' for football fans, with ticket swaps and sales.

LEARN A MARTIAL ART?

www.martialarts.net

Links and information for all manner of martial arts – plus it's an ISP to boot.

www.konjakushin.freeserve.co.uk

Let the National School of Karate show you the ropes.

FIND A NEWSGROUP?

rec.martial-arts

Wide-ranging newsgroup covering all martial arts.

JOIN A MAILING LIST?

Enjoy the best of sport trivia and rules at ***www.2play.com/surveys.htm***

GET CHATTING?

www.pitmaster.com

Join fellow cockfighters for live chat.

DIARY **18 September** Montana Invitational Footbag Tournament *www.footbag.org* | **2 October** Lumberjack Contest, Silver Dollar City, Dallas *www.silverdollarcity.com*

WORDS: BEN OLIVER; PICTURES: ALLSPORT

Off the beaten track

BACKPACKERS Millions of Britons travel the world every year, but it pays to do a bit of research online before you go

'I'm sure the Lakeside Centre is around here...'

Lonely Planet

www.lonelyplanet.com ★★★★★

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

The trusty travel writers are now in their 26th year and show that their knowledge of the World Wide Web is as impressive as their knowledge of the world. An excellent site where you can gain or pass on travel know-how in the Thorn Tree, post messages for fellow travellers in Postcards or get a taste of where you're going in the Optic Nerve gallery. Plus there is a mass of information on destinations, travel news, health advice and some great travel writing.

1000 Travel Tips

www.1000traveltips.org ★★★★

There are two kinds of backpackers – the ones who visit advanced countries in order to enjoy a year of doing nothing in comfortable surroundings, and those who really want to experience the harsher side of life in places such as Asia and Central America. This caters more for the latter and, despite the suspect design, it's a goldmine.

Backpacker Essentials

www.backpackeressentials.com.au ★★★★

There are loads of Aussies in Britain and there are loads of Pommies down under, which seems like a fair swap. Whichever group you belong to you're sure to benefit from this independent source. There's also plenty of info on other destinations, and tips from around the globe.

Backpack Europe

www.backpackeurope.com ★★★

On its own this is by no means the greatest site in the world, although the various tips and travel tales do make interesting reading. More importantly, each section has an extensive list of links to related sites that you probably won't come across anywhere else.

Backpackers' Index

www.ozemail.com.au/~backpack/ ★★★★

The most impressive feature here is the search facility – select any country, activity and price range and it will find appropriate tours. Also includes basics such as a currency converter (not for backpackers who rely on credit cards paid for by parents) and time zones.

The Backpacker Network

www.thebackpacker.net ★★★

There's no better way to find out the wheres, whys and whens than

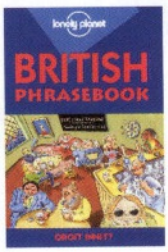
WORDS: PAUL WINSLOW; PICTURES: REX

DIARY **18 September** World Gurning Championships, Cumbria **9-18 September** Toronto International Film Festival

www.eventsworldwide.com

LANGUAGE

Pardon moi!



The British are 'notoriously foul-mouthed... Those at the cutting edge are moving towards a sort of Zen English in which fk will be the only word.' You'll also be glad to know that we spend practically our entire adult life in pubs. That's what it says in the Lonely Planet *British Phrasebook* and no matter where you are thinking of travelling, you should buy this anyway. It's a hilarious read, covering topics from football (David Beckham has a 'dodgy temperament and a nice haircut') to regional dialects. Check it out at *www.lonelyplanet.com/prop/bklist.htm***

to talk to other travellers who have already beaten the path you're about to tread. And as well as the obvious discussion forums, the most valuable feature is the beer index, which helpfully informs you how much you should expect to pay for your tipple. Bookmark it now.

Hostels.com

www.hostels.com ★★★★

It may be easy finding a hostel if you're visiting advanced countries such as Australia (technically advanced that is), but if you're heading for deepest, darkest Asia it can be a bit more difficult. Information on each hostel is brief, but at least it's there.

Rough Guides to Travel

travel.roughguides.com ★★★★

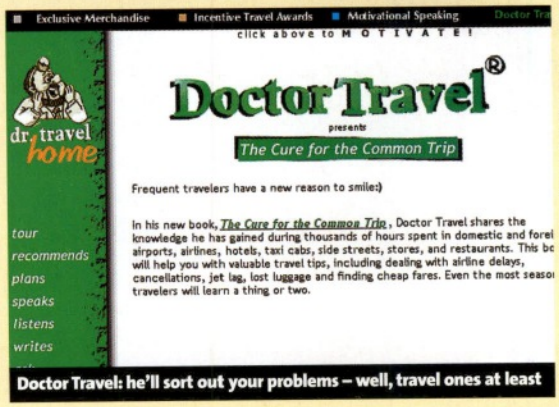
Apparently this site contains the complete text from all the guidebooks. Fine, but if you were to print out every page you wouldn't have room left for anything else in your rucksack, so it's not an ideal way to save money. The excellent online flight booking service from Internet Travel Network is built into the site – so if you can't wait to finalise a visit to somewhere you've seen, you won't have to.

best travel sites ★★★★★

where can I...

FIND THE BEST HOLIDAY AND FLIGHT DEALS?

www.a2btravel.co.uk
Huge travel site with air, sea and rail tickets plus holiday deals.
expedia.co.uk
Microsoft's free-to-use, travel resource with flights and holidays.
www.lastminute.com
Massively popular and useable guide to late deals and bargains.
www.travelocity.com
Another essential, all-round bookmark for the DIY traveller.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Incentive Travel Awards
Motivational Speaking
click above to MOTIVATE!
dr. travel home
tour
recommends
plans
speaks
listens
writes
Doctor Travel®
presents
The Cure for the Common Trip
Frequent travelers have a new reason to smile:)
In his new book, The Cure for the Common Trip, Doctor Travel shares the knowledge he has gained during thousands of hours spent in domestic and foreign airports, airlines, hotels, taxi cabs, side streets, stores, and restaurants. This book will help you with valuable travel tips, including dealing with airline delays, cancellations, jet lag, lost luggage and finding cheap fares. Even the most seasoned travelers will learn a thing or two.
Doctor Travel: he'll sort out your problems – well, travel ones at least

GET DESTINATION INFO?

www.Travel-Library.com
Resources and links for any country you care to name.
www.wtg-online.com/navigate/world.asp
Tips on finding a hotel, avoiding trouble with locals and cheap deals.
www.vtourist.com
Talk to fellow tourists before you set off, or use the directory for more info.

GET DOS AND DON'TS?

www.fco.gov.uk
Excellent travellers' resource from the Foreign Office; especially good at telling you the sort of places you shouldn't visit.

www.tips4trips.com
1000 'tips for trips' posted on a message board by fellow travellers.
www.totaltravel.net
Advice and experiences, plus links to airlines, hotels and all-important weather warnings.
www.doctor-travel.com
Take a travel tour, aimed at shedding the hassle of leaving the country.

FIND CHEAP ROUTES?

www.geocities. com/TheTropics/8168/travel.html
Backpacker's paradise – youth hostels, cheap B&Bs and advice.
www.netos.com/uct/
Good for finding work abroad and for visas and flights.
www.budgettravel.com
Vast, interactive guide to getting the best from cities on a budget.
www.stratpub.com
Links and advice on cheap travel from worldwide trippers.

SPEND A DAY OUT IN BRITAIN?

www.London Town.com/index2.html
Everything to do and see in our nation's glorious capital.

www.virgin.net/daysout
Those nice people at Virgin tell you exactly where to go. In the best possible way, of course.
www.kgp-publishing.co.uk
The ultimate guide to British B&Bs, with photos and maps.
vzone.virgin.net/neil.mowforth
Find the theme park to suit you in this excellent guide.

FIND A BUSINESS TRAVEL EXPERT?

www.equator-net.co.uk
Useful portal for business travellers, with helpful articles on finding the best deal and a secretaries' forum.
www.thetrip.com
Look up flights, hotels and car hire firms for the business traveller.
www.business-travel.co.uk
Business travel information under one conveniently designed roof.
www.traveltrade.co.uk
Business travel 'consultants'; good for cheap flights and package deals.

FIND A NEWSGROUP?

alt.travel.road-trip
Plan a road trip anywhere in the world by sharing your knowledge with others who've done the same.

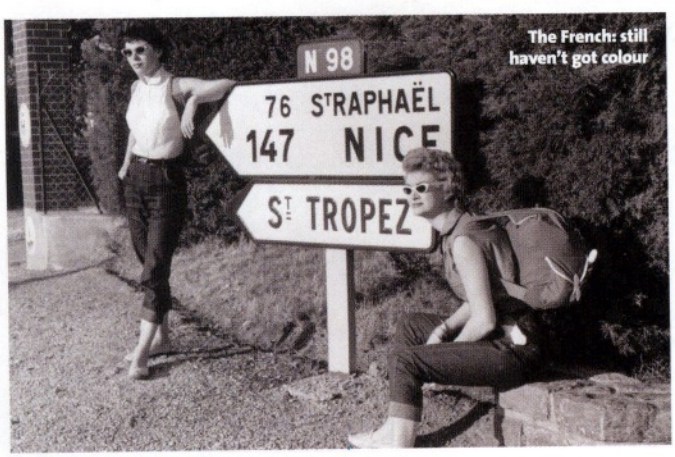
JOIN A MAILING LIST?

Join the pack at the Internet Travel Network list. Put 'subscribe' in the message to ***listserv@sunnyside.com.***

GET CHATTING?

www.4-lane.com/sportschat/newsc/bp_index.html
A chat room dedicated exclusively to backpackers the world over. Boasts a new chat every day.

Looking for more Travel sites? Turn to Need to Know on page 108



The French: still haven't got colour

STA Travel

www.statravel.co.uk ★★★

Backpacking is all about doing everything on the cheap, and the best way to save money is on your plane ticket. For students and anyone under 26 years old, STA travel offers some of the best deals around. Well worth a visit to check out prices and to get some ideas of where to go.

VIP Backpackers Resorts

www.backpackers.com.au ★★★

There's no such thing as VIPs in the traditional sense when you're backpacking, so this more than likely stands for Very Inexpensive Payments. Put simply, buy a card for about £10 and you'll get discounts from hostels around the world, and on activities such as skydiving and white-water rafting.

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'I'm getting fruit and oak...'

WINE Become a wine expert without spending a fortune – or drinking from a brown paper bag

Wine & Dine E-Zine

www.winedine.co.uk ★★★★

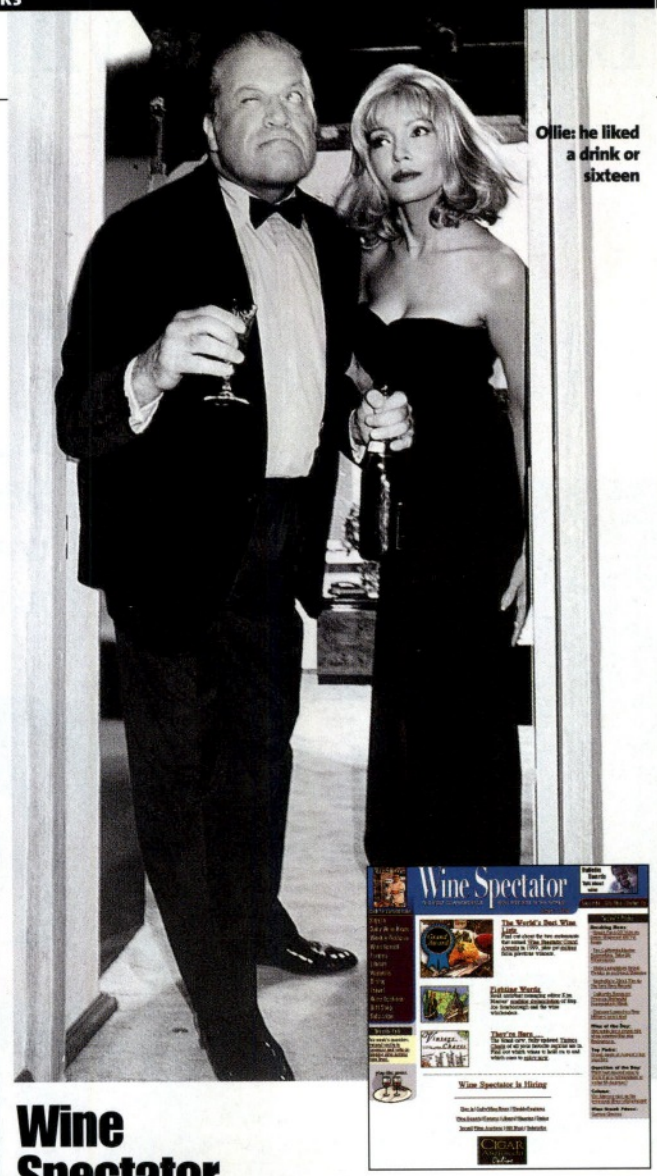
All the vital issues are thrashed out here with features ranging from the Tasmanian Distillery Debacle to the marriage of curry and wine. But what initially looks like a simple collection of articles turns into an entertaining foray into the world of wine and its people, not least because of such gloriously illustrative lines as 'it's a winner for the girls to wash down with beef cake or chicken korma.'

Some drink, yesterday

Wine on the Web

www.wineontheweb.co.uk ★★★★

Meet the star of this site, 'the Flying Wine Man', aka Andrew Jones, a journalist who notches up an average of 100,000 miles all in the name of searching out the best wines around the world – yeah, right. You can hear some of his (and others') insightful 'Radio Postcards' from vineyards around the world. There's also a handy searchable database, vintage charts, wine history and news of special high street promotions.


Ollie: he liked a drink or sixteen

Wine Spectator

www.winespectator.com ★★★★★

And you thought being a wine buff was a stuffy business? Not here: play the 'What Am I Tasting?' wine game ('what's jammy, spicy... with a zesty twist of pepper?'), or pretend to be in congress and vote to ship wine across state lines. The Wine Spectator site could turn even a hardened Liebfraumilch drinker into a discerning palate.

Wines.com

www.wines.com ★★★★

OK, we know it's not the same as watching Jilly swill it round and spit it out on the telly, but the Virtual Tasting Room makes a fair attempt at the black art of tasting. Meanwhile, the awfully informative virtual Wine Wizard leaves few corks unpopped when it comes to telling you how to pronounce a wine, what to eat with it and how much you can expect to pay for it (although it is in dollars).

Goulden shower

The Wine Place

www.wineplace.nu ★★★★

If you can't tell your sancerre from your soave or think St Emilion is a famous French football team, this is the place for you. With some wine sites, the sheer weight of information can be intimidating, so this friendly, back-to-basics site makes a nice change. It also features a marketplace where you can buy from other individuals, often for thousands of pounds.

DIARY **11 October Bibendum's Château d'Yquem tasting**
www.bibendum-wine.co.uk/news.html

best food & drink sites ★★★★★ where can I...

BUY WINE ONLINE?

www.winecellar.co.uk
Hang out at the Parisian café-style high street offie on the Net.

www.victoriawine.co.uk
Similar to above – see how the prices compare.

GET THE LATEST NEWS FROM THE FOOD WORLD?

www.food channel.com
Get all the lowdown on new tastes, and find yourself an eatery no matter where you are.

food.epicurious.com/
Strange little site offering cooking tips, chef profiles and some nifty food forums.

Food Biotech: genetic is good. Maybe

BUY INGREDIENTS ONLINE?

www.tesco.co.uk /indexn.htm
The most innovative of the big online supermarkets, offering 'aisle cruising' and extra Clubcard points.

www.Groceries.org.uk
Finds the best and cheapest food for you, then has it delivered to your door.

FIND A COOL RESTAURANT?

www.basesolutions.com/curryhouse
Finds you a local curry house to cater for your particular requirements. Very usable.

www.restaurants.co.uk
Search for an eatery, or visit one of the site's recommendations.

LEARN ABOUT GENETICALLY MODIFIED FOOD?

www.greenpeace.org/~geneng/
Learn how to avoid genetic foods, and where to protest.

www.food-biotech.org/
Presents the opposite side of the argument.

CURE MY HANGOVER?

www.The VirtualBar.com
Some useful cures, plus a drinking glossary and bar tricks.

www.wrecked.co.uk
Just one look at this drinking prevention page and you'll never touch a drop again.

FIND A NEWSGROUP?

alt.food
Anything and everything to do with the wide world of food. Try alt.food.low-fat for a fat-free version.

JOIN A MAILING LIST?

Discuss anything food or wine-related by sending a 'subscribe' email to ***listserv@cmuvm.csv.cmich.edu***

GET CHATTING?

www.smartwine.com/chat/
Join weekly chats on the world of wine, with the occasional celebrity.

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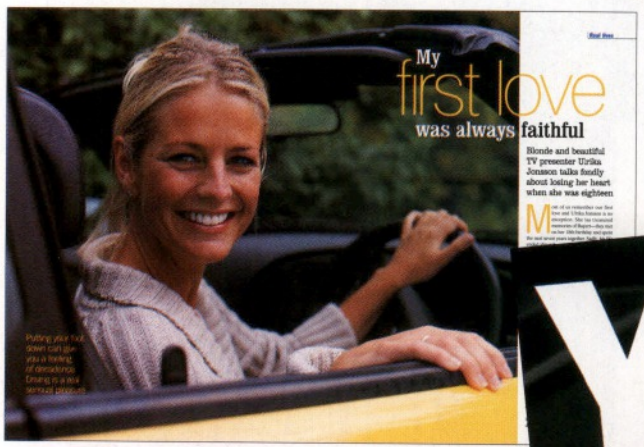
With the first women's new and used car guide tested by What Car? magazine experts


My
first love
was always faithful
Blonde and beautiful TV presenter Ulrika Jonsson talks fondly about losing her heart when she was eighteen

Celebrities' driving secrets revealed

Sleek sophistication
but at a price
Jenny Beck loves the look of the BMW Z3, but thinks it would be too frivolous to take to work

Find the perfect car for your lifestyle

Just right for large families
With four young, rapidly growing children, Margaret Allan needs all the space a Renault Espace offers

Inside information from experts

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173 new cars tested for yo
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Diff'rent Strokes

www.sitcomsonline.com/diffrentstrokes.html ★★★★★

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

He was only 4ft 8in tall, but at the height of this US sitcom's popularity Gary Coleman was commanding $80,000 an episode as fast-talking Arnold – who, with his brother Willis, was adopted by the kindly Philip Drummond. Real life wasn't so much fun, though, and Coleman, now a director for entertainment café Holoworld, sued his real parents for mismanaging his funds. Relive the show's heyday here with full episode guide, audio clips, pictures, plus Arnold's immortal line: 'Whatchoo talkin' 'bout, Willis?'

The kids always took a healthy interest in Mr Drummond's pullovers

WORDS: SUE WEEKES; PICTURES: RETNA, REX, SIPA PRESS

They used to be so cute...

CHILD STARS Teenage prodigies can be loveable. It's when they grow up that the trouble often starts

The Author's Jodie Foster site

www.geocities.com/Hollywood/Set/2417/ ★★★★

Jodie Foster was nicknamed 'Load' as a baby because of her amazing capacity to fill her nappy. Too much information? Well, probably not if you're a dedicated Jodie fan. There's plenty more where that came from. Did you know that Hollywood's third-most-bankable actress collects fancy kitchenware and made her screen debut as a bare-bottomed baby in a Coppertone commercial? Find video clips, audio and pretty much every interview published in the recent past.

Billie@C3: Billie's Only Official Site

c3.vmg.co.uk/billie/ ★★★★

English teachers (and sub-editors) may want to hang us for parading this one, but Billie fans won't worry too much about the pop star's liberal use of the exclamation mark (eight in one go), not to mention her aversion to a capital 'I'. There's nothing as substantial as a biography but 'Dear Danny' details her everyday life, including lunch at Harvey Nic's with gran – when Billie was dismayed that her cucumber soup was served cold. She has a lot to learn.

Is this how you want to end up, young Culkin?

Macaulay Culkin

www.culkin-domain.com ★★★

One trouble with child stars is that there are often more just like them at home – a source of angst for audiences and the original sibling. Macaulay hasn't starred in a film for five years but ensuing little Culkins are having no problem getting parts. At 19, Mac is now grown-up and married but fans can look back on the good (?) old days here and indulge in RealAudio clips from his best-known films.

The Cult of Ant & Dec

www.ant-and-dec.co.uk/index.html ★★

Nobody expects teenagers in children's TV series ever to grow up. Ant and Dec, the former *Byker Grove* duo of PJ and Duncan, show no signs thus far. You won't hear the fans complaining, though, as they lovingly tend this site, which features news, biographies (predictably and mercilessly short) and sound files. Those who want to join the cult can also print and cut out a mask of each of the lads. Scary stuff.

Judy Garland Database

www.zianet.com/jjohnson/contents.htm ★★★★

Working for 45 of your 47 years on the planet is rough, by anyone's standards. But when you're born to sing, dance and act, as Judy Garland clearly was, you don't have a lot of choice. This is a dignified and fitting tribute to the girl who went from child star to movie icon in her all-too-brief life. Whatever your question about Frances Gumm (she changed her name to Judy because she liked the peppy sound of it, and who can blame her?), you'll have it answered here.

Garland's apt all-singing/dancing site

www.rac.co.uk

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The new RAC Trackstar is the most advanced stolen vehicle recovery system. It can trace and locate a car to within 5 metres anywhere in the UK. A hidden receiver links the car to us via the GPS satellite system. We can then work with the police to recover the vehicle. (And often the thief.)

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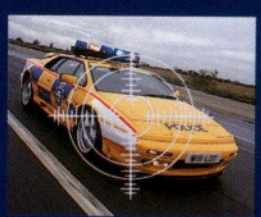

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The Not Very New Patsy Kensit Page

www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/3891/patsy.html ★★

The name says it all. There's not been much need for a career update to the former Bird's Eye pea girl's site since 1997, her Eighth Wonder career having somewhat fizzled out. But you can read glorious Patsy quotes, such as 'All I want to be is more famous than anyone or anybody' and, post break-up with Jim Kerr, the massively aspirational 'I'm looking for a bloke with a bit of a brain, and who drinks beer and plays football'. Wonder if Liam knew he was up against Gazza in the battle for the rock chick's heart...

The Bonnie Langford Mel Bush Internet Fan Club

tetrap.simplenet.com/drwho/mel/blmbifc.html ★★

Hughie Green unleashed an unnatural number of child stars onto the world via *Opportunity Knocks* (and still more, allegedly, from his own loins). Two fitted the precocious child star stereotype more closely than any others: Lena Zavaroni and Bonnie Langford. There's no sign of the raucous Scottish lass on the Net but Bonnie – on account of a near miss with credibility as *Doctor Who* sidekick Mel Bush – is celebrated. Trace her life in ringlets... To most, of course she is forever cherished as 'squeeming' Violet-Elizabeth from *Just William*.

Osmond.com

www.osmond.com ★★★

Not only can you buy Donny's signature online or enter an auction for Jay's son's sketches, you can also join the Backstage section (for a fee) and hope to win a phone call from an Osmond. It's a far cry from the original boy band's appearance on the *Andy Williams Show* in the '60s. But hell, if you can't take any more of this blatant commercialism, there's always Mother Olive's recipe section, where her choc chip cookie recipes go for free.

Britney Spears

www.britneyspears.org ★★★

'Britney enjoys being a girl,' says this site, which will no doubt come as a relief to the 17-year-old's parents, as well as her fans. She also 'loves colours to pop and shopping 'till you drop'. We can only guess that it all stems from admission into the hallowed *Mickey Mouse Club* at the age of 11 (she performed on the TV show for two years). Official Britney.com is not functional yet; in the meantime this site more than suffices, with plenty to download.

From top left: the prodigious Garland, those busy Os bros, and Pat and Brit

CELEBRITY FOOT FETISHISTS

Hollywood leg-ends online

You can tell a lot about a man by his feet, which is no doubt why teenagers are transfixed by *www.freeyellow.com/members2/videoboy/page2.html*. There's no story behind the feet – other than whose they are – but when your line-up includes Keanu, Leonardo, Brad, Matt Damon, Dean Cain, Mark Owen... who needs words? Of course, the fun part is to try to guess the owners of the feet before you see the names – especially since, much like the pictures themselves, the quality varies enormously. Brad's don't disappoint on any level, and Keanu's hold firm, but we rate *Baywatch*'s David Chokachi's best left in the locker room.

best celebrity sites ★★★★★

where can I...

READ GOOD GOSSIP?

www.mrshowbiz.com
Don't bother reading celebrity gossip columns in newspapers, Mr Showbiz gets there first – and there are great celeb games.
www.bezerk.com
A lengthy list of awards, news and information on celebrities.
www.goldi.com
A weekly update of the best (and the worst) celebrity gossip around.
www.edrive.com
Lots of gossip here, too, with reviews, features and extensive links to other star-studded sites.

Satiate your need for gossip at bezerk

READ MAGAZINES?

www.etonline.com
This puts you in touch with the dazzling worlds of music, television, film and video.
cgi.pathfinder.com/ew/
User-friendly archive covering movies, TV shows, etc, and all the entertainment news fit to air.
www.salon.com
Cerebral, wide-ranging Net-only entertainment and politics mag.
cgi.pathfinder.com/people/web/index.html
The popular US *People* magazine is always an interesting read.

FIND CELEBRITY HOME PAGES?

www.celebsites.com
Links to official sites of celebs from all walks of life.
www.celebs.com
Planning a US trip? A star may be appearing in a mall near you.
mw.simplenet.com/webring/index.html
Home of the fabled Celebrity Web Ring, a massive list of sites.
www.celebritysightings.com
No, not a list of fans and their sightings, rather a full list of celebrity sites.

FIND A STAR'S ADDRESS?

www.thezone.pair.com/email
This isn't just for celebrity emails – their addresses are available, too.
www3.islandnet.com/~luree/howto.html
Tips and tricks for tracking down your celebrity of choice.
members.aol.com/RIPOKICKS/index8.html
Full index of all AOL-listed celebrities, from Douglas Adams through to the Zoo People.
www.celebrityemail.com
Over 14,000 celebs, from supermodels to princes. Email the site and it forwards your missive.

MEET MY HERO?

www.yack.com
Check here for an updated list of current celebrity events.
chat.beeb.com
BBC stars sometimes drop in for chats just after their shows.
chat.yahoo.com
Comprehensive round-up of who's doing chat sessions.
www.virgin.net
Worth keeping an eye on for the odd megastar guest.

Catch a celebrity chat at virgin.net

BUY CELEBRITY ITEMS?

www.women-celebrities.com/celebritymall/celebritymall.html
Celebrity merchandise, posters, videos, books and calendars.
celebrityconnection.com/index.html
Buys and sells autographs, memorabilia, props and wardrobes.
www.csn.net/petrelle/mitchell.htm
Old-time autographs from some of the Hollywood greats.
www.autographs-etc.com
Buy autographs, including those of John Travlota and Gillian Anderson.

FIND A NEWSGROUP?

alt.fan.britney-spears
Keep up to date with the teen queen's latest movements – and those plastic surgery rumours.

JOIN A MAILING LIST?

To join the Jodie Foster mailing list, send an email marked 'subscribe' to ***listproc@u.washington.edu***

GET CHATTING?

www.celebritypalace.com
The busy chat room here covers all manner of celebrity gossip – enter it and take part.

www.get-your.co.uk

or your .com!

Online Domain Name Registration

includes:

Real-Time Online Setup
Web & Email Forwarding
Optional Holding Webpage
Free Email Autoresponder
Easy web-based administration
Domain Registration fees

2nd year free

www.get-your.co.uk

WebFusion™
Part of the WebFusion Group

WEBFUSION WELCOME

Surf to OR CALL **0115 9170000**

Ken Dodd: hit me with your tickling stick

WORDS: STEVE SHIPSIDE; PICTURES: REX

Screen out loud

BOREDOM BREAKERS Transform a turgid day at the office into a rib-tickling adventure. Well, almost

Centre For The Easily Amused

www.amused.com ★★★★

Never mind the *Ally McBeal* baby; this is your route to the source of the true dancing hamsters, the Elder Gods dance and a place where you can read Bob Hirschfeld's 'Skewpoint' (check the Microsoft error messages ads story). You also get the opportunity to make up your own Britney Spears song – chances are it'll be just as corny as the warblings of that God-bothering ex-mouseketeer herself.

Comedy Central

www.comedycentral.com ★★★★★

Loads of US comedy here, including *South Park* in full Flash glory. If time is weighing heavily, try your hand at driving Cartman's cool bulldozer through depleted Costa Rican rainforests. OK, it's just an online version of Frogger, but with the twisted bonus that you win points for turning endangered species into roadkill.

Private Eye

www.private-eye.co.uk ★★★

All your favourites from the current issue, including animated Yobs, lookalikes and Funny Old World. The site provides a chance to fill in the prize crossword online, plus the only way to see those contentious Diana issues (there being none available from the *Private Eye*'s back issues department). It's a shame that there's no archive on the site, but probably they want to keep the aforementioned back issues department in business.

Uproar

www.uproar.com ★★★★

Bored out of your mind at work? Why not have a go at winning money simply by picking the lowest number to be chosen that day? It's that simple: you pick a number, and if no one picks a lower one they send you cash. Of course that sounds ridiculous; the catch is that if someone else picks the same number, you're out. Still, what have you got to lose? It's not comedy, but it could add a new dimension to working life.

Funny

www.funny.co.uk ★★★★★

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

'If it's funny, it's here' is the proud boast of funny.co.uk. This is a surprisingly dry site given the subject, but gives you a wealth of jumping-off points for everything from Eddie Izzard's fan club to the best of Britcoms, plus all the lightbulb joke pages you'll ever need. Looking for Shockwave games to while away the hours before you can slide off to the pub? Want to chat to other seekers of truth and one-liners? Look no further. Oh yes, and it's British.

best funny sites ★★★★★ where can I...

Cartoon Network: something for the kids. And *Scooby Doo* for the parents, too

FIND COMEDY GIG LISTINGS?

www.timeout.com/london/hitlist/comedy.html

Comprehensive run-down of what's tickling funny bones in the capital.

www.whatsonstage.com

Anything to do with performance arts – and comedy in particular – under the one roof.

FIND SOMETHING FUNNY ON THE TELLY?

www.cartoon-network.co.uk

From *Scooby Doo* to *Johnny Bravo*, all your favourites are here.

www.paramountcomedy.co.uk

Home of the 'Panic Button,' a joke dispenser for your desktop.

FIND SOMETHING STRANGELY AMUSING?

www.cs.uoregon.edu/~hacks/misc/whale/

Half a ton of dynamite, one 45-foot corpse: the definitive exploding whale page. Thar she blows...

www.darwinawards.com

People who've purified the human gene pool by disposing of themselves through pure stupidity.

HIRE A FUNNYMAN?

www.entertainers.net

From Soho stand-ups to belly dancers.

members.aol.com/lromain/lro.htm

All sort of entertainers for hire.

LEARN TO BE FUNNY?

www.netgates.co.uk/customers/instantwit

Teaches improvisation and delivery.

www.clowns.freeserve.co.uk

Circus skills and general tomfoolery.

FIND SOME ONLINE JOKES?

www.jokedepot.com

Searchable archive of gags to share.

www.jokepost.com

Post your favourite for others to read.

FIND A NEWSGROUP?

rec.humor

Swap jokes with other would-be comedians online.

JOIN A MAILING LIST?

Discuss your favourite TV comedy shows at ***www.onelist.com/subscribe.cgi/comedytvshows***

GET CHATTING?

laugh.at/vicandbob/

Vic and Bob fans wax lyrical.

DIARY **Until 16 October** Eddie Izzard stars as comedian Lenny Bruce in Lenny at the Queen's Theatre in London

www.whatsonstage.com

'Does it hurt when I do this?'

DIAGNOSIS Worried about that little itch? Troubled by that mysterious pain? Get all of your problems diagnosed and your treatment sorted online here

Department of Health

www.doh.gov.uk ★

The UK government's Department of Health site is every bit as dull and stodgy as the US version is colourful and welcoming (***www.health.gov***). Compare the two: on the US site, one click takes you to community preventive medicine. On the British version, getting to the young-people-and-teachers' health pages takes an unnecessary four.

drKoop.com

family.drkoop.com/nancy/dns-ask.asp ★★★

Dr Nancy Snyderman provides brisk, no-nonsense medical advice. Alternative medicine gets the sympathetic approach while enquiries about diet pills and other miracle remedies receive short shrift. But the Q&As cover a wide range of topics, and the news and features pages deal with medical queries both wacky ('Are Belgian Waffles Dangerous?') and serious.

The Heart: An Online Exploration

sln.fi.edu/biosci/heart.html ★★★★

This pulsates with life as it conducts a tour of your heart's functions. The heart's structure is colourfully explained, and you're allowed to see what white blood cells look like (woolly pom-poms). Kids will like the gory bypass movie and the throbbing sound effects. Pumpin'.

Internet Mental Health

www.mentalhealth.com/p71.html ★

Great idea in theory, but this site, which claims to offer interactive diagnosis of psychological disorders, fails to deliver. The unusable diagnosis interface leaves a patient with a generalised anxiety disorder on being confronted with badly-constructed technology and acute stress disorder at having wasted so much time. Prolonged major lousy design syndrome does nothing to alleviate symptoms.

Flu? You'll want a ritual candle, then

Lucky Mojo

www.luckymojo.com ★★★

When you've lost faith in science, try a bit of hoodoo. This fun Californian site, home of the Lucky Mojo Curio Company, has a Southern States remedy for everything – try comfrey root for safety while travelling, or a Bolivian charm to keep bacteria away. The powders, oils and resins are all inexpensive – just as well, as customs might balk at the Essence of Bend Over powder.

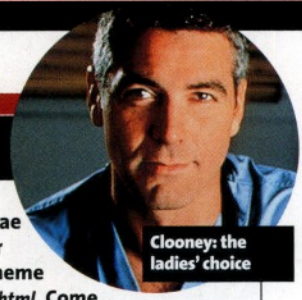
Mayo Clinic

www.mayohealth.org ★★★

The doctor is always in at the Mayo, one of America's most respected clinics: no registration necessary. The site is decorated in calming surgical-scrubs green and Medical Editor Kenneth G Berge, MD looks the picture of a kindly old GP. Questions receive sensible but uniformly brief answers – if you were feeling peaky you might want more detail. A site for the healthy people.

TV MEDICS ONLINE

What's up, docs?


Clooney: the ladies' choice

TV docs have come a long way since the BBC's *Dr Finlay's Casebook*. The Tannochbrae GP embodied the TV image of the NHS for years. Evoke Sunday tea-times with the theme tune, at *website.lineone.net/~sroylewis/index.html*. Come a full televisual circle and arrive at *ER*. In terms of Net coverage, *Casualty* doesn't even come close. It can't claim a site that translates the stuff they shout at one another; learn medspeak *ER*-style at *www. geocities.com/TelevisionCity/5196/* or download the theme tune at *www.netwalk.com/~ejones /themt-d3.htm*.

QuackWatch

www.quackwatch.com ★★★★

US doctor Stephen Barrett, MD, is on a mission to uncover the frauds and fads in the world of medicine, both alternative and traditional. There's a dedicated Q&A search engine archiving queries on everything from aspartame to St John's Wort, and you can pose your own question.

The Thrive Health Library

www.thriveonline.com/health/library /lookitup.html ★★★

When asked what behavioural optometry was, the initial 'Find Your

'Stop moaning, Mr Schumacher, it's only a scratch'

Intelihealth

www.intelihealth.com ★★★★★

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

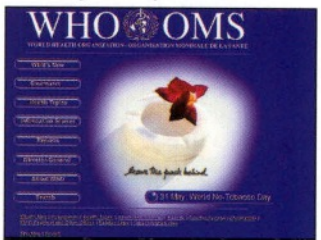
The Johns Hopkins site is one of those American sites 'where doctors diagnose you...*online*'. It's not quite like it sounds – there's no personal reply, for instance. But the chances of your query being answered on the site within 'a few weeks' are good. Top fears on the occasions we visited were Lyme Disease and mucoid plaque.

Answer!' option couldn't. So bypass that and head to the library for a detailed response. On the 'Ask the Experts' page, Dr Bill Lloyd doesn't demand you register to receive a detailed answer to your query (and he's very good on bubonic plague).

World Health Organisation

www.who.int ★★★★

As you pop another vitamin pill and worry about not eating organically, take a look at this site and feel your worries slink shamefacedly away. Here's where the world's ills get put into proportion – some 1.5-2.7 million people die of malaria a year. If you really must indulge in a good fret, take a look at the Flunet map. Still fancy that trip to Australia?



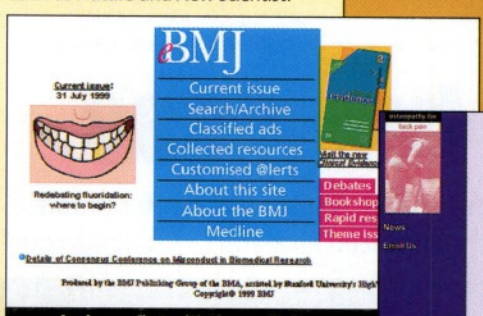
Wonder if there's a Doctor WHO?

best health sites ★★★★★

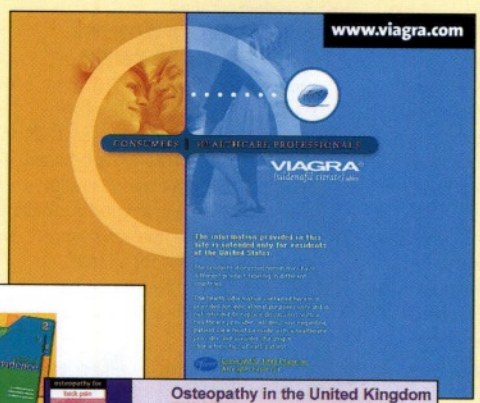
where can I...

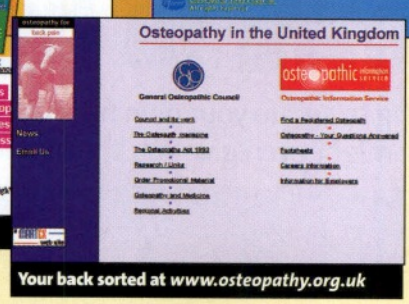
ENJOY A HEALTHY READ?

www.bmj.com
The *British Medical Journal*, where TV and radio producers poach their health reports from. Get the news in full – it alerts you when it publishes a topic you're interested in.
www.alphabetstreet.infront.co.uk
Trouble drifting off at night? Buy *The Promise of Sleep*, by William C Dement for £14.44. If the text doesn't work, you can always count the sheep on the cover.
www.americanhealth.com
Reader's Digest has come a long way since I Am John's Hypothalamus. This is its US magazine, full of low-fat cooking tips and ideas for stress-free living. Very readable.
www.englemed.demon.co.uk
An independent Web site carrying daily reports from the world of health and medicine. Not pretty, but full of extracts from publications such as *Nature* and *New Scientist*.



www.bmj.com: first with the medical news





Your back sorted at ***www.osteopathy.org.uk***

MAKE HEALTH A CAREER?

www.stjohnambulance.com
The St John always needs volunteers to learn First Aid and help out at major events. Ulterior motive: your next Glastonbury could be free.
www.enb.org.uk
The English Nursing Board. Enquire here for a career on the wards. It's a vocation, but the pay's getting better. See ***www.nbs.org.uk*** for Scotland, ***www.wnb.org.uk*** for Wales.
www.iosh.co.uk
Try a career in occupational health and safety in the workplace, from hard hats to toxins and acids.
web.bma.org.uk
The British Medical Association's homepage. Go for their guide to the best medical schools if you fancy white coat, stethoscope and no sleep for seven years.

FIND OUT ABOUT PREGNANCY?

home.clara.net/fenix/essential-survival-guide.html
One woman's online guide to before, during and after those nine months. Supportive.
www.ukmums.co.uk
For mums and dads – everything you could want to know about bringing up baby.
www.medicine.ox.ac.uk/ndog/ivf/
The Oxford Fertility Unit's site on in vitro fertilisation.
www.pregnancyguideonline.com
Find out what's happening and why with the week-by-week pregnancy guide – providing you're not too squeamish, that is.

TRY AN ALTERNATIVE?

www.reiki.org/reikinews/reikinews.html
Get all of those energy fields aligned online.
www.stat.org.uk
The Society of Alexander Technique Teachers' site lists people who can sort your dodgy posture out, whether you type or play the bagpipes for a living.
www.homeopathyhome.com
You'll find a search engine, a library, an education section, chat forums and lots of enticing ads on this sophisticated site.
www.osteopathy.org.uk/index.htm
Find out about the benefits of osteopathy on this UK home page – there's a good Q&A section.

CHECK OUT A HEALTH CONTROVERSY?

www.viagra.com
From Pfizer, the manufacturer. Viagra information supposedly for consumption in the US only, but go ahead: you won't go blind looking at it in the UK.
www.bpas. demon.co.uk
The British Pregnancy Advisory Service deals with fertility and pregnancy questions (but principally abortion) on this excellent site.
www.interlife.org
Anti-abortion, anti-euthanasia site. Ted Gerk offers a list of 'Groups resisting the death peddlers'.
www.ves.org.uk
The English voluntary euthanasia site. For Scotland see ***www.euthanasia.org/vess.html***

FIND OUT ABOUT KIDS' HEALTH?

www.bbc.co.uk/education/health/kids/
An upbeat site, with nice graphics and a great Shockwave-powered tour of the human body.
www.grandappeal.org.uk
Wallace and Grommit's Grand Appeal aims to raise funds to erect the first purpose-built children's hospital in the UK, in Bristol.
kidshealth.org
From the US Nemours paediatric foundation, with sections for kids, teens (a bit American, this one) and parents ('Positive parenting' is big).
www.asthma.org.uk
National Asthma Campaign site, with a research round-up and useful support addresses and numbers.

FIND A NEWSGROUP?

alt.health
Discuss anything off the beaten track on this alternative health newsgroup.

JOIN A MAILING LIST?

Get support and advice if dieting by sending an email marked 'subscribe' to ***majordomo@listserv.prodigy.com***

GET CHATTING?

www.docsonline.com
Chat online with doctors and specialist in the States. This week: assisted suicide, yes or no?

Looking for more Health sites? Turn to Need To Know on page 108

WORDS: ANN OLIVER; PICTURES: REX, FOTOS INTERNATIONAL

DIARY 10 October World Mental Health Day 11-17 October Deaf Awareness Week 31 October National Bug Busting Day
www.healthdiary.hea.org.uk

Get down to business

START A FIRM Looking to set up your own business? The Web can offer practical assistance – and it might even give you the financial kick-start you need, too

'A software company. Don't be so ridiculous Mr Gates'

Inc.Online

www.inc.com ★★★★★

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

If you're starting your own business, this is the place to come for inspiration. Inc. is everything you'd expect of an online business magazine from the world's largest economy: vast, slick and endlessly optimistic. The legal and financial stuff is very US-specific but there are hundreds of sharply written stories on starting and growing your own firm that are relevant to entrepreneurs everywhere. If you don't leave with five new start-up ideas, you haven't been paying attention. Makes business (almost) sexy.

Bplans

www.bplans.com ★★★★

Another US site, but one that offers to help with every entrepreneur's nemesis: the business plan. Any reputable source of funding will want to see a business plan before it agrees to part with any cash. There's a stack of content here that will help you persuade your backer, with a special section for start-ups which applies to the UK, too.

The Development Capital Exchange

www.equity-invest.com ★★★★

Had the idea, founded the firm – now you'll need some money. DCX is an innovative, totally Web-based means of finding finance. It allows you to offer a stake in your business to 35,000 private investors who are on the lookout for a small enterprise about to make it big. If someone's willing to sink half a million into a Polish fast food chain, why shouldn't you get 10 grand to start your chippy in Chingford?

The Enterprise Zone

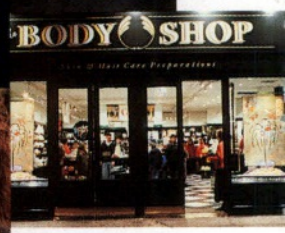
www.enterprisezone.org.uk ★★★

No British site matches the awesome Inc. but EZ has collected those that come close. Established by the DTI to help small businesses use the Net effectively, it has a well-organised library of links to the best UK business resources, with a section devoted to start-ups. Little original content, but you do get 'celebrity' chats and an online shop for office supplies.

The Franchise Business

www.lds.co.uk/franchise ★★★★

Still stuck for ideas? Buying a franchise is the easiest way to set up your own business. You buy the rights to set up a branch of a well-known brand. They give you the kit, training and a national marketing campaign. Failure rates are low, and there are hundreds of opportunities listed here, some in areas you've probably never even considered. Not pretty, but useful all the same.



You too can join the enterprising ranks of Bill, Rick and 'Nita

Midlands Company Services

www.company-services.co.uk ★★★★

Once you've decided what you're going to do, you'll probably want to set up a limited company to trade through. Doing it the conventional way isn't difficult, but this gem of a site makes it ridiculously easy. From your desktop you can have your company legally incorporated in 24 hours, with all the documents delivered direct to your door.

NatWest Small Business

www.natwest.co.uk ★★

However you finance your firm, you'll need to open a business bank account. Even the smallest of companies need a whole bunch of banking services you've never heard

CASH MACHINE MADNESS

Hole-y cow

If the hole in the wall is being a real pain in the bum and refusing to give you any money, do not resort to violence. A US court has sentenced Domenico Germano to four years' probation for emptying his revolver into a cashpoint. He was ordered to pay $5000 in compensation. Where he's going to get the money from isn't made clear. From dailynews.netscape.com/dailynews/offbeat

of, and this site introduces you to them. Filter out the NatWest hard sell and there's useful content here. You can also order copies of the company's business guides.

NetExporter

www.netexporter.org.uk ★★★★

We don't need to convince you that your business needs a Web site. This excellent service from the Glasgow Development Agency will tell you how, make you think about what you expect from your site, then show you how to create it.

The Prince's Trust

www.princes-trust.org.uk ★★★

More free money on offer here: The Prince's Trust offers grants and loans to 18-to-30-year-olds starting businesses. The site only deals with the Trust's services, but the content is well written, logically organised and looks good. The only down side is the obligatory cheesy photocall with His Royal Earness.

Weekend City Press Review

www.news-review.co.uk ★★★★

In industry, information is everything. The business sections of the Sunday papers are one traditional source of relevant knowledge, but if you've just done an 80-hour week making your new firm a success you won't want to spend all weekend wading through newsprint. These folk will do it for you and send you a digest, and there's an archive and clippings.

WORDS: BEN OLIVER; PICTURES: HULTON GETTY, REX

'I think some proper advice might help...'

best money sites ★★★★★

where can I...

GET MONEY NEWS AND SHARE PRICES?

www.ft.com

The mother of all money sites: news, prices and analysis all served up in trademark pink.

www.bbc.co.uk

Comprehensive world business news and in-depth features, backed by Auntie's rock-solid reputation.

www.bloomberg.co.uk

Provides the professionals with up-to-the-second data; mere mortals can access it here.

www.ukinvest.com

News, real-time quotes and RealAudio market round-ups, with advice for newbies.

TRADE SHARES ONLINE?

www.barclays-stockbrokers.co.uk

The bank offers real-time dealing and acres of solid advice.

www.schwab-worldwide.com

Mega UK dealing account from the US giant, ideal for first-timers.

www.stocktrade.co.uk

Dealing service for UK stocks, with account info and portfolio tracking.

www.forex-cmc.co.uk

The first dealer in foreign exchanges and futures online.

SORT OUT MY FINANCES?

www.thisismoney.com

Online personal finance adviser from the *Daily Mail*.

Follow the latest financial events at Bloomberg

Wall Street Journal - a bit like the FT

www.iii.co.uk

Advice and content for individual investors: free Internet access and email, too.

www.moneyextra.com

Compare bank accounts, credit cards, mortgages and savings online: make sure you're getting the best deal.

www.times-money.co.uk

More personal finance advice, plus glossary, bookshop and tourist exchange rates.

LEARN ABOUT INVESTING?

www.mrscohen.com

The venerable Bernice Cohen (aged 62 and billed as one of Britain's best private investors) on how to invest your money.

www.fool.co.uk

Proven advice for the learner investor – more a philosophy than a Web site.

www.tipsheets.co.uk

Online investment bookshop with a section devoted to beginners.

www.armchairmillionaire.com

Practical guide to making a million (possibly from your armchair). It's US-based but still interesting.

GET FINANCIAL ANALYSIS?

www.invweek.co.uk

Award-winning financial paper *Investment Week* takes a long view.

www.economist.com

A century and a half of sagacity online.

www.hemscott.com

Sign up for the free ISP and get access to a mine of analysis.

www.wsj.com

The US equivalent of the *Financial Times*. Great for news and advice.

SORT OUT MY TAX?

www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk

Advice on tax returns and a useful self-assessment link to help beat those pesky deadlines.

listen.to/taxman/

Give it your financial details and it'll calculate how much tax you owe.

www.uktax.demon.co.uk

Useful links to government and independent tax resources.

www.tax.org.uk

Tax advice from the Chartered Institute of Taxation. OK, not compelling stuff but useful.

FIND A NEWSGROUP?

uk.finance

Traders and investors large and small gather to discuss UK markets and financial instruments.

JOIN A MAILING LIST?

Join the list from ***1929.com*** and follow Warren Buffett, the world's most successful investor.

GET CHATTING?

www.daytradingstocks.com

Chat live to all of those mad Yank day traders.

Looking for more Money sites? Turn to Need To Know on page 108

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WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

- Savings come as standard—the top 40 bestsellers are discounted daily by a massive 50%, with thousands of others discounted by up to 40%.
- For the hottest titles around, look no further than the Amazon.co.uk Hot 100. Updated hourly, these are the books that customers couldn't live without in the last 24 hours.
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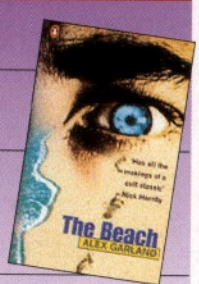
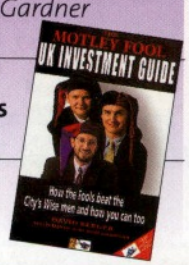
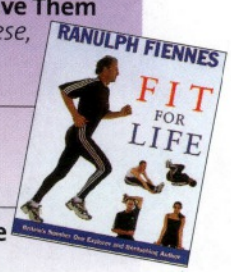
- Sign up for Amazon.co.uk's editor recommendation service and you will receive monthly e-mails giving expert reviews and hand-picked suggestions in your favourite subject areas.
- Tell it how it really is and leave your mark with a customer review, posted on the site for other readers to share. Who knows—you might even start a debate!
- Too busy to get to the shops? The Gift Centre gives perfect suggestions for every occasion and parcels can be giftwrapped and delivered for you. There are even ideas based on the signs of the zodiac!

Amazon.co.uk recommends:

BOOKS YOU SHOULD HAVE READ BY THE TIME YOU ARE TWENTY	BOOKS YOU SHOULD HAVE READ BY THE TIME YOU ARE THIRTY	BOOKS YOU SHOULD HAVE READ BY THE TIME YOU ARE FORTY
Frankenstein *by Mary Shelley*	**Slaughterhouse Five** *by Kurt Vonnegut*	**War and Peace** *by Leo Tolstoy*
Midnight's Children *by Salman Rushdie*	**The Prince** *by Niccolo Machiavelli*	**The Old Man and the Sea** *by Ernest Hemingway*
The Beach *by Alex Garland*	**The Motley Fool UK Investment Guide** *by David Berger, David Gardner and Tom Gardner*	**Families and How to Survive Them** *by Robin Skynner, John Cleese, Bud Handelsman*
The Complete Kama Sutra *translated by Alain Danielou*	**The Relate Guide to Better Relationships** *by Sarah Litvinoff*	**Take Off 10 Years in 10 Weeks for Men** *by Judith Wills*
Bridget Jones's Diary: *a Novel by Helen Fielding*	**The Whole Woman** *by Germaine Greer*	**Ranulph Fiennes: Fit for Life** *by Ranulph Fiennes*







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It's all Greek to me...

FOREIGN LANGUAGES Believe it or not, you can bid adieu to the monolingual world and learn a brand-new language online. Here's where you can do it

Central and Eastern European Languages

www.cusd.claremont.edu/~tkroll/EastEur/ ★★★

While major languages are well catered for on the Net, Eastern European dialects are a little thin on the ground. Bravely attempting to make up for that, the site provides 14 languages covering the range from Polish to Estonian. Tuition is far from in-depth, but at least you'll be perfectly capable of saying 'I don't understand' next time you encounter a Lithuanian.

International Language Development

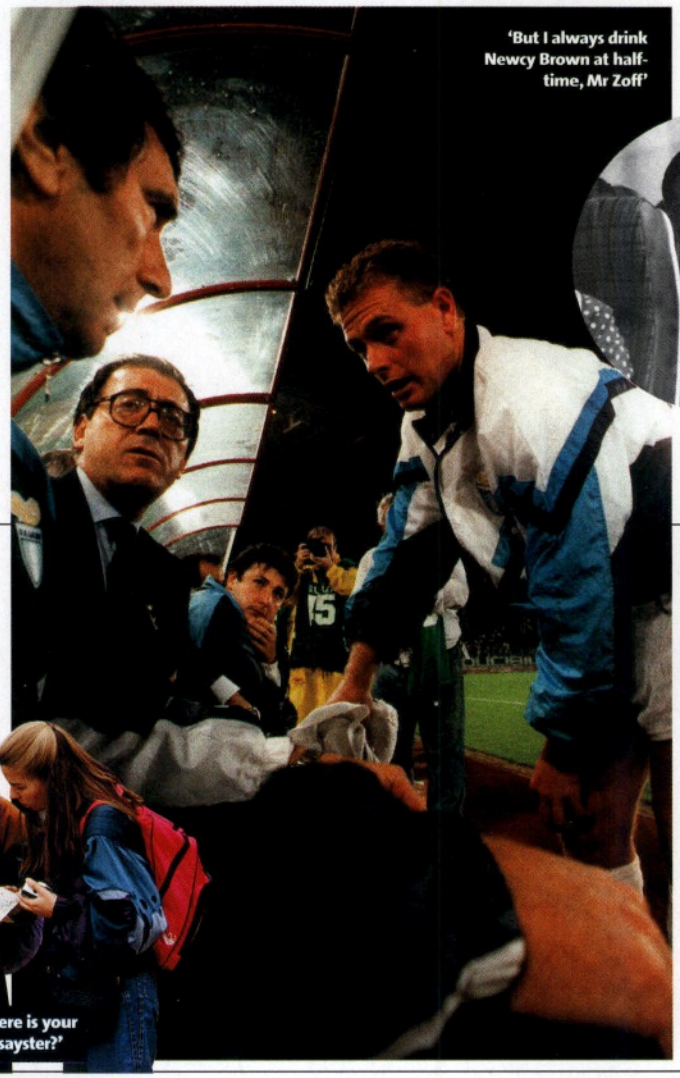
www.ild.com ★★★

Listening to a foreign dialect is undoubtedly the best way to learn to speak it. This tidy site utilises that possibility to the utmost, combining text conversation with downloadable audio. Six major languages, each taught in 20 bite-size units, make this site worth a look for its thorough tuition. Beware, though: you have to pay a fee of nine dollars for the privilege.

Learnplus

www.learnplus.com ★★★★

Currently containing only Spanish and German instruction, this site is far from extensive – more is on the way, we understand. What is there is first-class however, even if odd design makes it a touch difficult to navigate. The excellent lessons themselves are free but to benefit fully you have to pay a fee of around £30, for which you get access to an online tutor who will help you on your way.



'But I always drink Newcy Brown at half-time, Mr Zoff'

'Where is your Worsayster?'

Say Hello to the World Project

www.ipl.org/youth/hello/index.html ★★★

Learn the lingo, turn the tables

Ever visited a foreign country and not even been able to greet the locals? This site sets out to remedy that. Providing basic instruction in 30 languages, it also has great links if you'd prefer to take your skills further than the basic *hei*.

Travlang

www.travlang.com ★★★★★

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

A truly *wunderbar* site for anyone looking to grasp the basics of a foreign language with beginners' tuition in a whopping 70 languages, ranging from Albanian to Zulu via Gujarati. The top-notch sound clips ensure correct pronunciation, and the superb online dictionaries cope admirably with any bizarre words you may wish to indulge in. Current exchange rates and a natty hotel database add to the intercontinental experience. It'll have you chatting like a native in no time at all.

best education sites ★★★★★ where can I...

LEARN WITH MY KIDS?

www.sotonweb.com/homepage.htm
Free UK resource for parents and teachers.

www.liv.ac.uk/~evansjon/
UK-based links resource for all manner of learning.

GET HELP RE-SITTING A-LEVELS?

www.a-levels.co.uk
Help with a dozen popular subjects.

www.justincraig.ac.uk
Intensive cramming aimed specially at re-sitters.

FIND A PLACE TO LEARN?

www.indschools.co.uk
Easy-to-use resource listing the UK's independent schools.

www.darch.co.uk
The best place to look if you intend to send a sprog to boarding school.

LEARN WITHOUT GOING TO SCHOOL?

www-icdl.open.ac.uk
The Open University – it needs no introduction.

Get rid of your kids at darch.co.uk

www.nec.ac.uk
Personal tuition and support, both at home and part-time.

LEARN OVERSEAS?

www.eeop.com
Leisure and learning for adults and young people in Europe and the US.

www.ribi.org/yex/
Rotary Youth Exchange offers school year exchange programmes for 16-22-year-olds.

FIND A NEWSGROUP?

uk.education.16plus
Covers everything for students, teachers and parents.

JOIN A MAILING LIST?

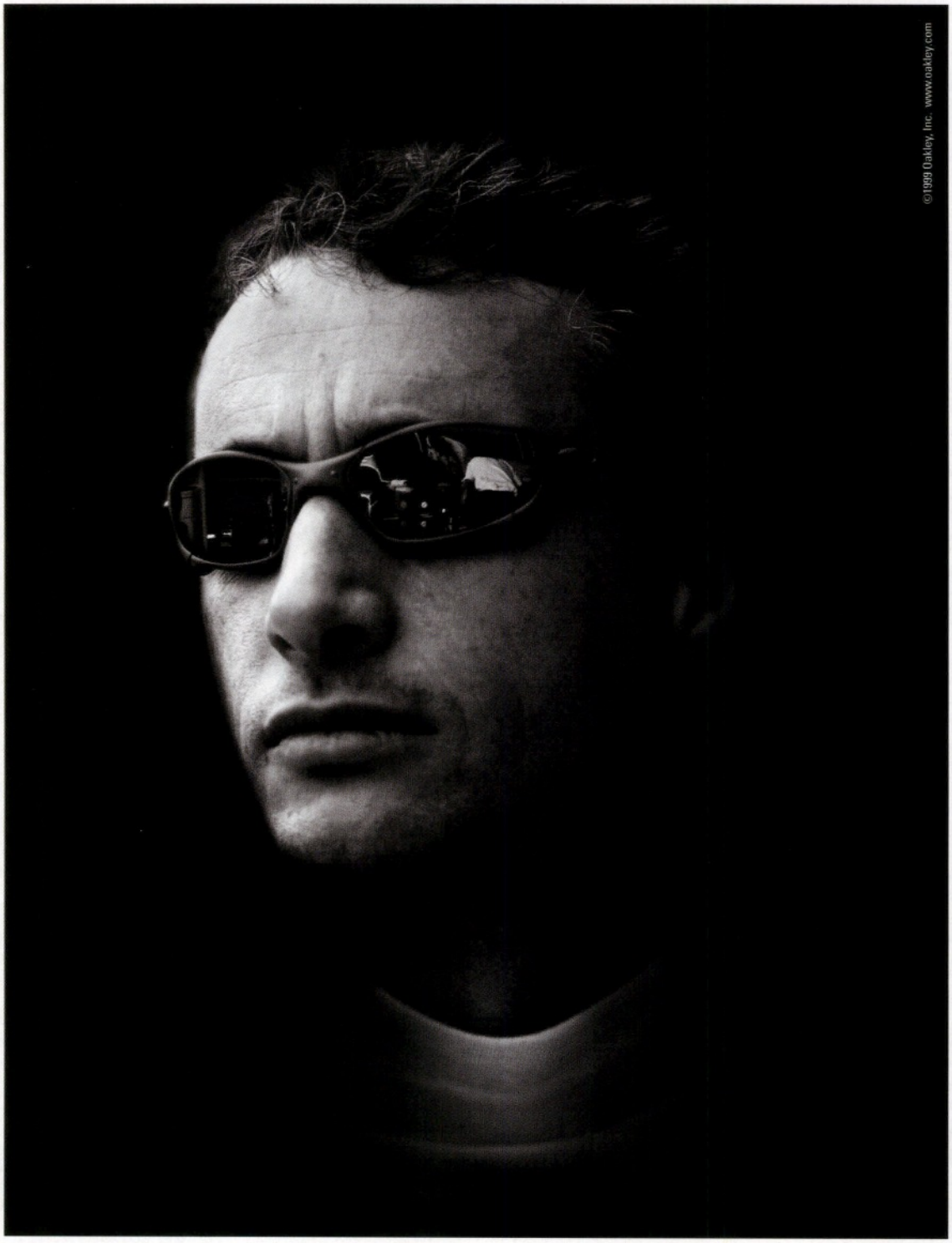
Email ***mailbase@mailbase.ac.uk*** with 'join uk-schools' plus [Your Name] for the UK Schools list.

Special offers and chat at Student UK

GET CHATTING?

www.studentUK.com
Register with the UniverCity and enjoy chat, special offers and forum-type deals, all pitched right at students.

WORDS: SARAH WAKELY



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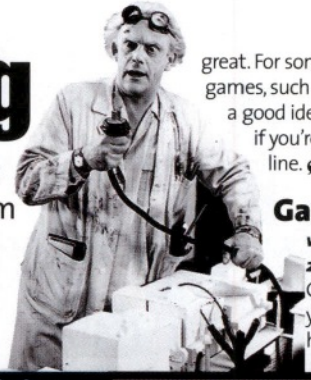
How shocking

SHOCKWAVE GAMES They're among the most amusing on the Net. Here's where to find 'em



Candystand Arcade

www.candystand.com ★★★★

A collection of great Shockwave games sponsored by American candy company LifeSavers. You can play golf, or catch some big air in the Extreme Stunt Bike game. But be warned: this is an American-biased site so all the prizes on offer are for our US cousins only. Design is also pretty intense with some pages taking a while to appear in all their day-glow glory. As such, it feels like a slightly tacky theme park and comes highly recommended for those on a sugar high.

Clevermedia's Arcade

www.clevermedia.com/arcade/

★★★★★

The hub of many related sites all making use of Shockwave for games. It includes the addictive (like the mah jongg-based Nile Tiles), the arcade, and the classics (such as chess and reversi). The site isn't as user-friendly as Shockwave.com, but the quality of the games is great. For some of the longer games, such as Nile Tiles, it's a good idea to disconnect if you're using a phone line.

Games2play

www.games2play.com ★★

Games can make you scratch your head for two reasons: they are fiendishly difficult and require all your spare mental capabilities, or they just don't make a lot of sense. These games tend to fall into the latter category. One game, Float 2, just left us bemused.

Shockwave: not like this

Fill Cartman with Cheesy Puffs. Really

'Say what you see...?

Shockwave.com

www.shockwave.com ★★★★★

the net ★★★★★ AWARD

Is there anything more fun in the world than stuffing Eric Cartman with cheesy puffs? Find out, and play classic games such as Missile Command, at this site. Shockwave is a plug-in for your browser that lets you interact with games and gizmos. Such games tend to be simple but entertaining, taking on average about three minutes to load. You'll need the latest version of Shockwave to make best use of the site, but once you have you'll be able to control all the cartoons and games here.

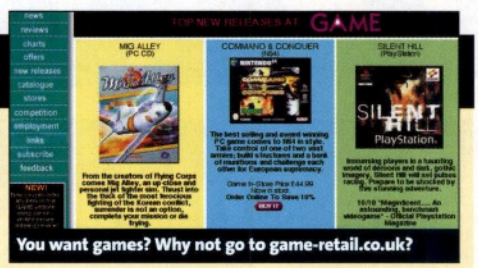
Jamba

www.jamba.co.uk ★★★★

What do Shockwave games mean? Prizes. TV firm Carlton is now on the Web with Shockwave quizzes and games. Gems include trivia challenges, *Carry On Bingo* and the classic *Catchphrase*, a game that could have been designed for the Web. There's also a chance to win prizes – and you won't have to jump up and down and kiss Michael Barrymore should you do so.

best games sites ★★★★★

where can I...



You want games? Why not go to game-retail.co.uk?

FIND RETRO GAMES?

www.classicgaming.com

Old gaming favourites eerily brought back to life.

www.aargh.com

Relive the 'good old' days when all computer games were played on a telly – where else?

FIND HINTS AND TIPS?

www.gamesdomain.co.uk

Public-contributed cheats for most popular gaming platforms.

www.gamefaqs.com

Huge database of cheats and tips for console users.

LEARN MORE ABOUT ONLINE GAMES?

www.wireplay.co.uk

One of Britain's biggest online gaming services, courtesy of BT.

games.yahoo.com

Free chess,backgammon, poker and other popular games.

BUY GAMES?

special.reserve.co.uk

Huge selection of software and hardware from the specialists.

www.game-retail.co.uk

Ten percent off any marked games ordered online.

FIND GAMING NEWS?

www.gamesdomain.co.uk

Great news and features on the games that really matter.

www.ign.com

An amazing site for hardcore global gaming updates.

FIND DEMOS & REVIEWS?

www.happypuppy.com

The newest demos and shareware games online, with a search facility.

www.imgmagazine.com

Simply unmissable games resource for Mac owners – huge and bang up-to-date.

FIND A NEWSGROUP?

uk.games.misc

For games discussion. Seek-out dedicated groups for specific titles.

JOIN A MAILING LIST?

Subscribe from ***www.geocities.com/Hollywood/Trailer/7504/.*** Handles info for CD-ROM, N64 and PSXs.

GET CHATTING?

Sign in on ***chat.yahoo.com*** and select Comp: Games to exchange views.

Looking for more games sites, turn to Need To Know 108

WORDS: STEWART DEAN

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EUROPE'S OWN INTERNET PC, PlayStation & N64 GAME STORE • WEEKLY OFFERS / DISCOUNTS / ALL PRICES INCLUDE FREE UK DELIVERY
URwired.com

FourFourTwo

INTO EUROPE

The complete guide to the Champions League and Uefa Cup draws, fixtures and danger players

Kanu Beckham Paolo Maldini Kanchelskis George Graham

On sale Wednesday 8 September

'Awwwww, mum'

Growing pains

TEEN TORMENT An abundance of acne? Romantic problems? Parents on your case? Sort it online

Advice For The Modern Teen

www.angelfire.com/ny/SweetSk8er/modernteen.html ★★★★

Concerned advisors (some of whom are teenagers themselves) answer questions sent through an email form... then put the pick of them online for the world to snigger at. The diverse archive of angst here ranges from 'Is suicide the only answer?' (all together now...) to 'Is pornography normal?' Good, clean fun for the most part.

Teen Advice Online

www.teenadviceonline.org ★★★★

'I was wondering if it is OK to stare at others' privates in the shower after gym class?' The weirder the problem, the more replies it elicits here – which makes this a very appealing site indeed. The archives cover queries on everything from onanism to online dating, while a series of articles from counsellors sets the world to rights.

Teentalk

www.teentalk.com ★★★★

The cleanest-looking (and cleanest-living, it seems) of the teen help sites, Teentalk is a comprehensive database of message boards in which all manner of quandaries are mulled over. Inevitably, they range from the sublime to the simply puzzling.

Lucie Walters

www.lucie.com ★★★★

OK, she might look like your best mate's strangely attractive mum, but Ms Walters' pearls of wisdom are big news Stateside. Her 'Adolessons' column (imagine a slightly more streetwise 'Dear Deidre' without the Photo Casebook) dispenses maternal advice to tortured teens worldwide. You might say that she's a sort of Earth mother.

Nine months too late to help, sadly

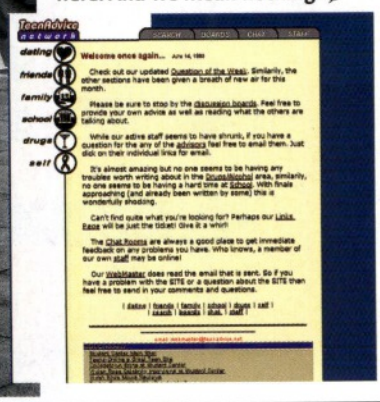
WORDS: ROBERT JEFFERY

TeenAdvice

www.teenadvice.net ★★★★★

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

'Becca' has a love bite. 'Aella' has a crush on her best friend. If friends, family, school, dating or, indeed, illegal intoxicants are troubling you, make TeenAdvice your first stop. With weekly problem pages and message boards, nothing is too small an issue to be aired here. And we mean nothing.



best kids sites ★★★★★

where can I...

BUY TOYS ONLINE?

www.toysrus.co.uk

Offers easy shopping access to all the big-name-brand toys.

www.argos.co.uk

Detailed descriptions of the toys on offer make this a must-see.

FIND IDEAS FOR FUN DAYS OUT WITH THE KIDS?

www.bbc.co.uk/ukok/

The BBC does it again with this guide to fun for the holidays.

www.timeout.com/london/hitlist/children.html

Reviews of plays, shows and events in all major cities.

GET ADVICE ON PARENTING?

www.ukmums.co.uk

Informative and user-friendly ezine – no parent should miss out.

www.parents-news.co.uk

Local activities and holidays for families in an easy-to-use format.

FIND BEDTIME STORIES?

www.home-office-mall.com/bedtime-story/

A Godsend for busy, go-getting parents – stories that you can print out and bring home from work. You could even pretend you wrote them.

www.cochran.com/theodore/

A tugboat-related tale, with tips on good story-telling technique.

A Yahoo! for teenagers at teen-net

FIND WEB SITES FOR TEENAGERS?

www.teen-scene.com

Chat rooms, forums and a whole load of links for the wired teenager.

www.teen-net.com

An innovative teen portal, with music, sport, forums and features.

FIND A NEWSGROUP?

alt.skincare.acne

Face like a pepperoni from Domino's? Share your woes here – just don't expect a miracle cure.

For kids and grown-ups – the Toys 'R' Us online shop

JOIN A MAILING LIST?

If you just can't stop dropping bundles of joy, join 5kids – the list for parents of five or more kids– mail 'info 5kids' to ***treescot@aculink.net***

GET CHATTING?

www.athenenet.co.uk/homepages/AndyGill/

Swap babies stories or advice with other parents on this accessible site.

Digital Garage: vroom, vroom

Make every day a desktop day

THEMES If your desktop looks like a bomb site, why not pretty it up with some tasty downloads?

Digital Garage

www.digitalgarage.net/home.htm
★★★★

Never shy of pushing a metaphor too far, obviously, the fine people at Digital Garage have come up with a top-quality selection of hot-rod-related icons and wallpaper. After watching endless ham-fisted celebrity tributes flick by, the airbrushed cool that Digital Garage exudes makes the site worth the visit, even if you don't like muscle cars driven by white trash.

IconFactory

www.iconfactory.com ★★★★★

A Mac wouldn't be a Mac without the odd custom icon, and IconFactory is the finest resource of high-quality Mac icons on the Web, bar none. The prodigious talents of the Factory have made Lego blocks an indispensable part of the Mac interface. Windows users needn't feel left out, either: download StuffIt Expander from ***www.aladdinsys.com*** and then IconShop from ***www.ping.be/liontech/*** and you can convert these icons to Windows format.

Kaleidoscope

www.kaleidoscope.net ★★★

Mac users wanting more variety would be advised to look out for Kaleidoscope, a Mac control panel that lets you change the look of the Mac OS on the fly. Kaleidoscope comes with a collection of fun schemes (not themes, apparently), and hundreds more are available elsewhere. Our favourite is the Grayscale Scheme, which actually seems to make the desktop faster, but the usual frivolities are available, too. Be warned, however: Kaleidoscope tends to break with every Mac OS upgrade, and the next OS upgrade is imminent.

LiteStep

www.litestep.com ★★★

The foolhardy, brave or just technically freaky PC user should head to LiteStep. Instead of merely modifying the ubiquitous Microsoft front end to make it look nicer (not difficult), LiteStep rolls out an entirely new graphical user interface in place of the familiar, clunky Windows look and feel. LiteStep lets techheads have much more control over the way that their PC performs and behaves; it's also faster and uses less memory.

Mac Themes

macinsearch.com/users/MacPower/theme.html ★★★★

The integrity of the Mac OS is sacred. So it was a surprise when, a little before the launch of Mac OS 8.5, Apple showed off some rather fancy desktop themes. But by the time we got 8.5 they weren't there.

Register Your Name .net
domain direct
Welcome to...
FreeThemes
"Over 10,000 files ONLINE!"
Come on in and enjoy the Web site that thinks it is your desktop!

FreeThemes

hensa.freethemes.com ★★★★★

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

This is the undisputed heavyweight themes site, and part of the fantastically successful Tucows network. It gets a top rating here not for its somewhat unusual approach to Web design but because it takes the task of collecting themes seriously – if you're after a particular celebrity theme they have everyone from the Bee Gees to Dani Behr. It's searchable, lists every tool you might need, and extends beyond simple Windows themes into mini-themes (skins) for bits of your everyday online life such as Winamp or ICQ.

See Dani Behr every morning

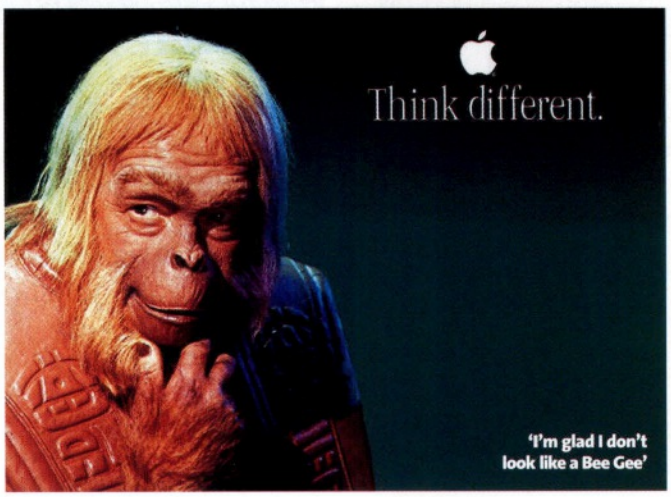
Apparently Mac ubermeister Steve Jobs had personally banned them for looking cheesy. There are still some about, and, to be frank, you can see his point. At the time of writing the whole set was available here – but Apple is slowly closing down sites that publish them, so be sure to get there quick.

Propaganda Themes

www.propagandathemes.org

★★★★

Making a good tile for a desktop background is an arcane art. It's easy to make square patterns, like the standard Windows desktop offerings, but making the swirly organic patterns to be found here is hard. Trust us, we've tried. Propaganda uses some major graphics funk to pull these gorgeous patterns off, even if one is much reminiscent of the next. They're meant for Linux users, but PC folk can join in by right-clicking and selecting 'Set as Wallpaper'. Mac users have to go a further way round by saving images to disk and setting them as desktop patterns.



'I'm glad I don't look like a Bee Gee'

'I'm glad we don't look like monkeys'

Themes 'n Schemes

www.themes-n-schemes.com ★

Like the themes it purveys, the Themes 'n Schemes site is darned ugly and a pain to use. Considering that the point of a theme is to make your computer look more attractive, it's surprising just how many horrible themes and crappy theme sites there are in existence. People with no visual sense whatsoever should be barred from doing this sort of thing and sent back to designing DSS offices.

Theme World

www.themeworld.com ★★★★

Comprehensive, and a bit faster than Free Themes, this is a worthwhile resource (although it still looks a bit pants, to be honest). There's an awesome (appropriate teen word) collection of Anime themes, as well as some more peculiar things like Fraternity themes – uhuh, you're sure to really want those, whatever they might be. By the way, why are there so many options for making your treasured PC screen look exactly the same as a dull old Mac's?

Tysoft

www.tysoft.co.uk ★★★

Home of some very fine icons and tools for the job. The wheat-to-chaff ratio here is reassuringly high, even if you do have to flick past some Visual Basic programming stuff to get to the eye candy. This represents the only British-based themes entry on our list, sadly. Come on, surely we can do better than the Yanks. OK, so maybe not...

best computer sites ★★★★★

where can I...

FIND HOT SHAREWARE?

tucows.cableinet.net

Odd name, but the best collection of shareware there is around.

www.download.com

Use the popular picks feature to find out what you shouldn't be without.

'The centre of the digital universe,' it says here

GET THE FINAL WORD?

www.cnet.com

'The center of the digital universe': everything a Net user could need.

www.zdnet.co.uk

Another computing supersite, this time with a specific UK slant.

GET HELP AND ADVICE?

www.mydesktop.com

Excellent computer news and features, plus tech support.

www.ask-a-tech.org

'Helping you help yourself'; allows you to submit specific questions.

FIND USER GROUPS?

www.lmug.org.uk

Enthusiastic Mac user group. Good for beer and software tips.

www.wugnet.com

Resource centre for shareware, support, tips and a whole lot more.

BUY HARD- & SOFTWARE?

www.cwonline.co.uk

Award-winning Mac bits suppliers.

www.software-warehouse.co.uk

Software heaven; everything you need from a wide range of makers.

GET STUFF FOR MAC USERS?

www.flashpaper.com/umac/

It's called The Ultimate Macintosh: go there and you'll find out why.

www.webintosh.com

Excellent systems, software and peripherals newsletter.

FIND A NEWSGROUP?

uk.comp.misc

Covers a wider range of topics than most computer newsgroups.

JOIN A MAILING LIST?

For A-Computer World, a discussion on all things computer-related, go to ***www.onelist.com/subscribe.cgi/A-Computer-World***.

GET CHATTING?

chat.zdnet.com

Colourful US chat site with tech-talk in an accessible fashion.

Looking for more Computers sites? Turn to Need To Know on page 108

WORDS: JIM SMITH

INSTALLING AND TROUBLESHOOTING

Warming to one's theme

Making a theme turns out to be a piece of cake, provided your cake isn't too complicated. Both Mac and Windows users can get hold of simple tools that let you compile images and sounds into a unified interface masterpiece – or a dodgy collection of Britney Spears pictures, depending on your ambition, skill and talent. This explains a lot. PC users can get all the advice they need from the Free Desktop Themes site (*freehosting2.at.webjump.com/fr/freedesktopthemes-webjump/frames5.htm*), while budding Mac Kaleidoscope designers (to date the tools behind actual Mac themes like DrawingBoard are secret Apple technology) can go look at Lloyd Wood's Scheme site at *www.ee.surrey.ac.uk/Personal/L.Wood/kaleidoscope/* for some suggestions.

Live sect show

CULTWATCH Taking over the world? Convinced you're the new messiah? Find your disciples on the Net

Cult Information Centre

www.xenu.net/cic/ ★★★

This is a British group dedicated to monitoring cults and offering help to ex-members. The over-zealous tone of their advice may strike you as just as scary as the cant of most of the groups they're trying to eradicate (it takes one to know one, perhaps), but they mean well. They also provide links to all manner of raving nutcases, if you really fancy a giggle.

The KLF look is back in this year

Cults R Us Hitlist

www.mayhem.net /crime/cults.htm ★★★

You can thank all those twisted thrill-seekers at Mayhem.net for this inspired archive of killer cults and the blood-baths they brought about – from Jim Jones and the People's Temple to the Florida kids who did away with a school band leader. Fascinating and frightening in equal measure.

Fireman Sam calls for backup

Doomsday, Destructive Religious Cults

www.religioustolerance.org/ destruct.htm ★★★

Whether you're looking to join a cult 'liable to cause loss of life' or you're simply curious, you'll find all the information you need here, with profiles and links for all the most dangerous groups out there.

Interestingly, the authors predict 'rising hysteria' among such parties as Y2K approaches, so stay tuned – and keep pets indoors until it's all over.

FACTNet

www.factnet.org ★★★★

Centred on a regularly-updated newsletter devoted to the monitoring of loonies worldwide, the Fight Against Coercive Tactics site is full of links, helplines and first-person accounts of cult coercion. We're told that cults' tactical armoury includes 'excessive repetition of routine activities, humiliation and sleep deprivation'. Just like most of the firms we've worked for, then.

best weird sites ★★★★★

where can I...

FIND WEIRD NEWS?

www.joeha.com/whiteboard/

A collection of those silly little stories to email to your mates.

www.tabloid.net

National Enquirer-style paper, which mixes truth and fiction.

GET THE LOWDOWN ON ALIEN LIFE?

www.seti-inst.edu

The world's top ET-hunters track down the little green men.

www.conspire.com

UFO files, plus conspiracy theories and other madness.

All manner of weirdness at conspire.com

FIND BIZARRE PICTURES?

www.forteanpix.demon.co.uk

Ghosts, UFOs, freaks and fools by the *Fortean Times* – who else?

hometown.aol.com/cbpiclover/page2/crime.htm

Pictures of 'ghosts.' But are they faked or are they real? You may never know, but it's worth a look.

SEE SOME WACKY WEBCAMS?

www.jpl.nasa.gov/flower/

Watch the 'corpse flower' – which 'smells like burning flesh – bloom.

www.flyvision.org/sitelite/Houston/GhostWatcher

Webcams from some people who believe they might have ghosts.

SCARE MYSELF STUPID?

www.deathclock.com

Type in your date of birth, then let the clock count down to your predicted death. Nice.

cw.orangenet.co.uk/~greggman/

Murderers: their victims, their methods, their motives.

FIND SOME MILLENNIAL MADNESS?

www.beastwatch.com

Who is the Antichrist? And where will he appear? Find all the answers (sort of) on this site.

www.mille.org

The Centre For Millennial Studies gives a full breakdown on Y2K, and plenty of links.

JOIN A NEWSGROUP?

alt.support.ex-cult

Talk to those who have escaped cults' clutches, or get support.

FIND A MAILING LIST?

Get more info on cults by joining from ***www.freedomofmind.com***

GET CHATTING?

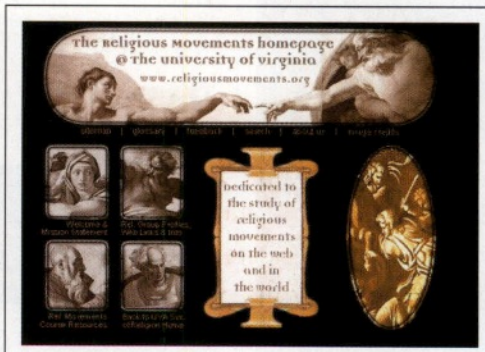
www.y2knews.com/chat.htm

Discuss how to dodge the apocalypse on New Year's Eve – and how to build that bunker.

Charles Manson shines at the *Are You Being Served?* audition

DIARY **7 September** The world ends – for the fourth time this year

apocalypseprettysoon.com


the religious movements homepage
@ the university of virginia
www.religiousmovements.org
dedicated to the study of religious movements on the web and in the world

Religious Movements Homepage

cti.itc.virginia.edu/~ jkh8x/soc257/home.html ★★★★★

thenet ★★★★★ AWARD

If you ever wonder how far into the depths of insanity humankind could plunge, pay a little visit here. Pretty well every barmy cult in creation is documented on this US site, complete with links and details of doctrine. A special mention must go to the Foundation Church of the New Birth, whose Web site features a letter dictated by Jesus himself. Nurse, the screens...

WORDS: ROBERT JEFFERY; PICTURES: RETNA, REX, SIPA PRESS

TO BUY OR SELL A CAR JUST CLICK HERE!

WHAT CAR? TEXT ✔ **WHAT CAR? ONLINE** ✔

SKYTEXT PAGE 502 — www.whatcar.co.uk

NOW, TO FIND THE PERFECT NEW CAR OR SELL THE ONE YOU'VE GOT, ALL YOU NEED IS A MOUSE OR TV REMOTE...

Britain's best car buying and selling service is now live on Sky TV and the internet.

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- Getting the latest car reviews and news

To reach What Car? Text,
just go to page 502 on Skytext.

To log onto What Car? Online, go to
www.whatcar.co.uk on the world wide web.

WHAT CAR?

BRITAIN'S BEST CAR BUYERS' GUIDE IS NOW LIVE!

egg: Individual Money Matters
It Pays to be Online.
With Egg's internet only Savings option, you manage your money online and we'll pay you 5.75% gross p.a./AER from just £1.
More Info
Internet Offer
Find out about Egg's new free Internet service.
PC Offers
A Pentium III PC installed in your home from only £889.00
Tailored Loans
A fast decision with competitive rates and the flexibility to choose your repayment period.
Savings Online
Manage your savings online, day or night. Get a Mini-statement, transfer funds, request stationery or change your account options to Internet only.
Egg Info
Apply Online
Products
Egg-Free Zone
Contact Us
Your Account
Site Contents

FINANCE Suss out the best savings around – it's in your interest

GOVERNMENT Tell Kate Hoey why Man Utd should stick with round balls

PICTURES: HULTON GETTY, REX

Your helping hand

The biggest problem using the Web is knowing where to start. If you're lost in cyberspace,

BANKING AND FINANCE

ONLINE BANKS

Abbey National ***www.abbeynational.co.uk***
Barclays ***www.barclays.co.uk***
Capital Bank plc ***www.capitalbank.co.uk***
Citibank ***www.citibank.com/uk/***
Co-operative Bank ***www.co-operativebank.co.uk***
Egg ***www.egg.co.uk***
First Direct ***www.firstdirect.co.uk***
Halifax ***www.halifax.co.uk***
Hamilton Direct Bank ***www.hdb.co.uk***
HSBC ***www.banking.hsbc.co.uk***
Lloyds Bank ***www.lloydsbank.co.uk***
Nationwide Building Society ***www.nationwide.co.uk***
NatWest ***www.natwest.co.uk***
TSB ***www.tsb.co.uk***

STOCK EXCHANGES AND MARKETS

American ***www.amex.com***
Australian ***www.asx.com.au***
The Baltic Exchange ***www.balticexchange.co.uk***
Brussels ***www.stockexchange.be***
Cayman ***www.csx.com.ky***
Hong Kong ***www.sehk.com.hk***
London ***www.londonstockex.co.uk***
Montreal ***www.me.org***
New York ***www.nyse.com***
Stockholm ***www.xsse.se***
Swiss ***www.swx.ch***
Tokyo ***www.tse.or.jp/eindex.html***
Vancouver ***www.vse.ca***

CLASSIFIEDS

AdHunter ***www.adhunter.co.uk***
Economist Classifieds Market Place ***www.classified.economist.com***
Eureka-net ***www.eureka-net.co.uk***
Free Classified ***www.freeclassified.co.uk***
JJ Electronic Plaza Classifieds ***www.jjplaza.com/onlinead***
Localads ***www.localads.net***
London's Classifieds ***www.classifieds-free.net***
LOOT ***www.loot.com***
netTRADER ***www.nettrader.co.uk***
PhotoAds ***www.photoads.co.uk***
Photographic Ads ***www.nitehawk.com/iga/ads.html***

DOWNLOADS

Apple ***asu.info.apple.com***
DaveCentral ***www.davecentral.com***
Download Net ***www.download.net***
Download Warehouse ***www.downloadwarehouse.com***
Freeware ***www.freewarehome.com***
ICQ ***www.icq.com***
Memoware (PDAs) ***www.memoware.com***
Microsoft ***www.microsoft.com/downloads/***
MP3 ***www.mp3.com***
Real Player ***www.real.com***
Shareware ***www.download.com***
ZDNet ***www.hotfiles.com***

ENCYCLOPEDIAS

Encyclopedia Britannica ***www.eb.com***
Encyclopedia Mythica ***www.pantheon.org/mythica***
Encyclopedia of Law & Economics ***encyclo.findlaw.com***
Grolier Multimedia Encyclopedia ***gme.grolier.com/free.html***
Hutchinson Encyclopedia ***www.bt-ern.co.uk/helicon***

FOOD AND DRINK

DIRECTORIES

Cooking Index ***www.cookingindex.com***
Food Channel ***www.foodchannel.com***
KitchenLink ***www.kitchenlink.com***
Meals.com ***www.meals.com***
Restaurants.co.uk ***www.restaurants.co.uk***

GAMES

GUIDES AND COMPANIES

Game Daily ***www.gamedaily.com***
Future Games Network ***www.fgnetwork.com***
GameCenter ***www.gamecenter.com***
Game Daily ***www.gamedaily.com***
GameSpot ***www.gamespot.com***
GameSpyder ***www.gamespyder.com***
GameStats ***www.gamestats.com***
GA Source ***www.ga-source.com***
MultiPlayer ***www.multiplayer.com***
Nintendo ***www.nintendo.com***
Playstation ***www.playstation.com***
Sega ***www.sega-europe.com***
Total Video Games ***www.totalvideogames.com***
Zone ***www.zone.com***

GENEALOGY

British Ancestral Research ***www.brit-a-r.demon.co.uk***
British Heraldic Institute ***www.kwtelecom.com/heraldry***
Family Search ***www.familysearch.com***
Genealogy for All ***www.excaliburknights.com/genealogy/***
Genealogy Research Source ***www.genealogy.bookpub.net***
Public Record Office ***www.pro.gov.uk***
Rootsweb ***www.rootsweb.com***

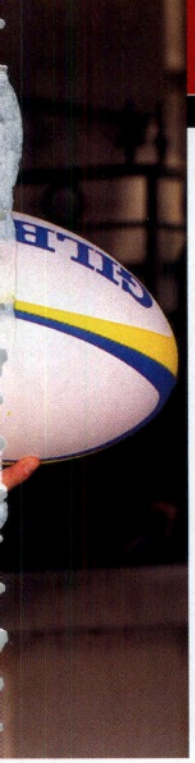
GOVERNMENT

BRITAIN

10 Downing Street ***www.number-10.gov.uk***
Action 2000 ***www.open.gov.uk/bug2000/index.html***
Arts Council ***www.artscouncil.org.uk***
Department for Culture, Media and Sport ***www.culture.gov.uk***
Department for International Development ***www.dfid.gov.uk***
Department of Health ***www.doh.gov.uk***
Department of the Environment, Transport and Regions ***www.detr.gov.uk***
MAFF – Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries & Food ***www.maff.gov.uk***
Ministry of Defence ***www.mod.uk***
Scottish Parliament ***www.scotland.gov.uk***
Welsh Assembly ***www.wales.gov.uk***

THE WORLD

Australia ***www.fed.gov.au***
China ***www.gov.cn***



FOOD Cooking with Fanny

HEALTH One Special Brew too many? Get help and support at the Alcoholics Anonymous Web site... before it's too late

GAMES Follow the dream

KIDS That's one big bird at www.sesame street.com/preschool

to Net greatness

why not use our **monthly updated** guide to all of the people, services and sites you need?

European Commission ***europa.eu.int***
France ***www.premier-ministre.gouv.fr***
Germany ***www.bundesregierung.de***
Russia ***www.gov.ru***
United Nations ***www.un.org***
United States ***www.whitehouse.gov***

HEALTH

DIETING

Better Health ***www.betterhealth.com***
British Heart Foundation ***www.bhf.org.uk***
Calorie Control ***www.caloriecontrol.org***
Cyberdiet ***www.cyberdiet.com***
Weight Watchers UK ***uk.weightwatchers.com***

SUPPORT & INFORMATION

Alcoholics Anonymous ***www.alcoholics-anonymous.org***
Alzheimer's Disease Society ***www.alzheimers.org.uk***
Cancer Bacup ***www.cancerbacup.org.uk***
Diabetes UK ***www.diabetic.org.uk***
HIV/AIDS Information & Links ***www.brad.ac.uk/staff/ijhodgson/hivlinks.htm***
National Autistic Society ***www.oneworld.org/autism_uk***
National Meningitis Trust ***www.meningitis-trust.org.uk***

HOMES

ESTATE AGENTS

Bushells ***www.bushells.com***
Chancellors ***www.chancellors.co.uk***
CityLet ***www.citylet.com***
Cluttons Daniel Smith ***www.cluttons.com***
Egerton ***www.egertonproperty.co.uk***
Friend & Falcke ***www.friendandfalcke.co.uk***
General Accident ***www.gaproperty.co.uk***
Goldschmidt Howland ***www.goldschmidt-howland.co.uk***
Hamptons ***www.hamptons.co.uk***
John D Wood ***www.johndwood.co.uk***
Knight Frank ***www.knightfrank.co.uk***
Strutt & Parker ***www.struttandparker.co.uk***
Winkworth ***www.winkworth.co.uk***

PROPERTY FINDERS

Accommodation Directory ***www.accommodation.com***
Byehome ***www.byehome.com***
Homefile UK ***www.homefileuk.co.uk***
Homepages ***www.homepages.co.uk***
Home to Home ***www.home-to-home.co.uk***
HouseNet ***www.housenet.co.uk***
Internet Property Finder ***www.propertyfinder.co.uk***
Property Sight ***www.property-sight.co.uk***
UK Property Gold ***www.ukpg.co.uk***

JOBS

EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES

Brook Street ***www.brookstreet.co.uk***
Independent Appointments ***www.indappts.co.uk***
Manpower ***www.manpower.co.uk***
The Media Network ***www.tmn.co.uk***
Reed ***www.reed.co.uk***

JOB SEARCHES

Expat Network ***www.expatnetwork.co.uk***
Golden Square ***www.goldensquare.co.uk***
Gradunet ***www.gradunet.co.uk***
Guardian ***www.jobsunlimited.co.uk***
Jobsearch UK ***www.jobsearch.co.uk***
Jobsite ***www.jobsite.co.uk***
MonsterBoard ***www.monster.co.uk***
Overseas Jobs ***www.overseasjobs.com***
Personnelnet ***www.personnelnet.com***
WorkWeb ***www.workweb.co.uk***
Yelcom ***www.yelcom.com***

KIDS

0-8

Bedtime stories ***www.home-office-mall.com/bedtime-story***
FunSchool ***www.funschool.com/preschool***
Kidscom ***www.kidscom.com/orakc/Mousers/mouse.html***
Nickelodeon ***www.nickjr.com***
Sesame Street ***www.sesamestreet.com/preschool***

8 PLUS

AJ Kids ***www.ajkids.com***
BBC Schools Online ***www.bbc.co.uk/education/schools***
Club-Z ***www.club-z.com***
EduWeb ***www.eduweb.co.uk***
Family Education ***www.familyeducation.com***
BJ Pinchbeck Homework Helper ***www.bjpinchbeck.com***
Thunk ***www.thunk.com***
Yahooligans ***www.yahooligans.com***

MAGAZINES

ONLINE MAGS

Britannia Internet Magazines ***www.britannia.com***
Feed ***www.feedmag.com***
Gigaplex ***www.gigaplex.com***
Salon ***www.salonmagazine.com***
Slate ***www.slate.com***
Teeth ***www.teethmag.com***

MOTORING

CAR FINDERS

Autobytel ***www.autobytel.co.uk***
Autohunter ***www.autohunter.co.uk***
Autotrader ***www.autotrader.co.uk***
CarDeal UK ***www.cardeal.co.uk***
Carseekers ***www.carseekers.co.uk***
Carsource ***www.carsource.co.uk***
Exchange and Mart ***www.exchangeandmart.co.uk***
New Car Net ***www.new-car-net.co.uk***
Virtual Showroom ***www.virtualshowroom.co.uk***
What Car? Online ***www.whatcar.co.uk***

CAR MANUFACTURERS

Audi ***www.audi.co.uk***
BMW ***www.bmw.co.uk***
Citroen ***www.citroen.co.uk***
Daewoo ***www.daewoo.co.kr***
Ferrari ***www.ferrari.it***

NEWS Hold the front page

MUSIC Jen extends a warm welcome

NEWS Find out how to get your news tailored and on tap at www.itn.co.uk

SPORT What's taller: Italian stallion Gianfranco Zola or www.chelseafc.co.uk?

Fiat **www.fiat.co.uk**
Ford **www.ford.co.uk**
Honda **www.honda.co.uk**
Hyundai **www.hyundai-europe.com**
Jaguar **www.jaguarcars.com**
Lotus **www.lotuscars.co.uk**
Mazda **www.mazda.co.uk**
Mercedes-Benz **www.mercedes-benz.co.uk**
Mitsubishi **www.mitsubishi-cars.co.uk**
Nissan **www.nissan-europe.com**
Peugeot **www.peugeot.co.uk**
Porsche **www.porsche.co.uk**
Rolls-Royce/Bentley **www.rolls-royceandbentley.co.uk**
Rover **www.mini.co.uk**
Subaru **www.subaru.co.uk**
Toyota **www.toyota.co.uk**
Vauxhall **www.vauxhall.co.uk**
Volkswagen **www.volkswagen.co.uk**
Volvo **www.volvocars.volvo.co.uk**

MUSIC
TOP ARTISTS
Abba **www.abbasite.com**
Ash **www.ash-official.com**
B*witched **www.b-witched.com**
Belle & Sebastian **www.belleandsebastian.co.uk**
Blur **www.blur.co.uk**
David Bowie **www.davidbowie.com**
Cardigans **cardigans.net**
Catatonia **www.catatonia.com**
Divine Comedy **www.thedivinecomedy.com**
Garbage **www.garbage.com**
Iron Maiden **www.ironmaiden.co.uk**
Jamiroquai **www.jamiroquai.co.uk**
Jennifer Lopez **www.jenniferlopez.com**
Manic Street Preachers **www.manics.co.uk**
Marilyn Manson **www.marilynmanson.net**
Ricky Martin **www.rickymartin.com**
Oasis **www.oasisinet.com**
Placebo **www.placebo.co.uk**
Radiohead **www.radiohead.co.uk**
REM **www.wbr.com/rem/**
Rolling Stones **www.the-rolling-stones.com**
Tricky **www.polygram.com/polygram/mondo/tricky/tricky.html**
Robbie Williams **www.robbiewilliams.co.uk**

MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES
British National Space Centre **www.bnsc.gov.uk**
Eureka Children's Museum **ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/Eureka_museum/**
Hayward Gallery **www.Hayward-gallery.org.uk**
Imperial War Museum **www.iwm.org.uk**
London Transport Museum **www.ltmuseum.co.uk**
National Gallery **www.nationalgallery.org.uk**
Natural History Museum **www.nhm.ac.uk**
National Maritime Museum **www.nmm.ac.uk**
National Museum of Science and Industry **www.nmsi.ac.uk**
Royal Academy of Arts **www.royalacademy.org.uk**
Tate Gallery **www.tate.org.uk**

NEWS
NEWSPAPERS
Daily Record **www.record-mail.co.uk**
Financial Times **www.ft.com**
Guardian **www.guardian.co.uk**
Independent **www.independent.co.uk**
The Mirror **www.mirror.co.uk**
Daily Star **www.megastar.co.uk**
The Sun **www.currantbun.com**
Sunday People **www.people.co.uk**
The Telegraph **www.telegraph.co.uk**
The Times **www.the-times.co.uk**

NEWS SERVICES
CNN **www.cnn.com**
ITN **www.itn.co.uk**
NewsNow **www.newsnow.co.uk**
News Unlimited **www.newsunlimited.co.uk**
PA News **www.pa.press.net**
Reuters **www.reuters.com/news**

PEOPLE FINDERS
EMAIL ADDRESSES
Bigfoot **bigfoot.com**
Email Book **www.emailbook.com**
EmailFinder **www.emailfinder.com**
People Site **www.peoplesite.com**
WhoWhere **www.whowhere.com**
Yahoo **people.yahoo.com**

PHONE NUMBERS
BT Directory Enquiries **www.bt.co.uk/phonenetuk/**
Thomson Directories **www.infospace.com/uk.thomw/**
Yellow Pages **www.yell.co.uk**

SCIENCE
NEWS AND UPDATES
BBC Science **news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/sci/tech/default.htm**
Eureka Alert **www.eurekalert.org**
NASA **science.nasa.gov**
New Scientist **www.newscientist.com**
WhyFiles **whyfiles.news.wisc.edu/**

SEARCH ENGINES
About **www.about.com**
Altavista **www.altavista.digital.com**
Ask Jeeves **www.askjeeves.com**
Dogpile **www.dogpile.com**
Electric Library **www.elibrary.com**
FAST **alltheweb.com**
Google **www.google.com**
HotBot **www.hotbot.com**
Lycos **www.lycos.com**
MetaCrawler **www.metacrawler.com**
Northern Light **www.nlsearch.com**

SHOPPING
SHOPPING DIRECTORIES
Best of British **www.bestofbritish.com**
Buckingham Gate **www.buckinghamgate.co.uk**
Enterprise City **www.enterprisecity.co.uk**
IMRG **shops.imrg.org**
Internet Shopping **www.internetshopping.com**
ShopGuide **www.shopguide.co.uk**
Shoppers Universe **shoppersuniverse.com**
Shopping UK **www.internetics.co.uk/shop/**
Shops On The Net **www.sotn.com**
ShopYell **www.shopyell.co.uk**
Taxi **www.mytaxi.co.uk**
UK Max **www.ukmax.co.uk/shopping**
Yahoo! **shopping.yahoo.com**

SUPERMARKETS
ASDA **www.asda.co.uk**
Marks & Spencer **www.marks-and-spencer.co.uk**
Sainsburys **www.sainsburys.co.uk**
Somerfield **www.somerfield.co.uk**
Tesco **www.tesco.co.uk**

SPORT
FA PREMIERSHIP CLUBS
Arsenal **www.arsenal.co.uk**
Aston Villa **www.astonvilla-fc.co.uk**
Bradford City **www.legend.co.uk/citygent/index.html**
Chelsea **www.chelseafc.co.uk**
Coventry City **www.ccfc.co.uk**
Derby County **www.dcfc.co.uk**
Everton **www.evertonfc.com**
Leeds United **www.lufc.co.uk**
Leicester City **www.lcfc.co.uk**
Liverpool **welcome.to/lfc-online**
Manchester United **www.manutd.com**
Middlesborough **www.mfc.co.uk**
Newcastle United **www.newcastle-utd.co.uk/nufc/**
Sheffield Wednesday **www.swfc.co.uk**
Southampton **www.saintsfc.co.uk/index.htm**
Sunderland **www.sunderland-afc.com**
Tottenham Hotspur **www.spurs.co.uk**
Watford **www.watfordfc.com**
West Ham Utd **www.whufc.co.uk**
Wimbledon **www.wimbledon-fc.co.uk**

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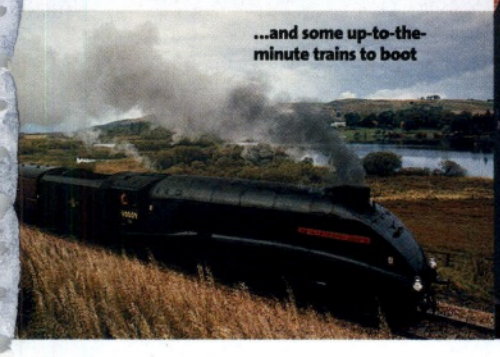
London to Manchester £55
Book online for great value fares to hundreds of destinations
Browser Info

TRAVEL Up-to-the-minute Virgin travel news



TELEVISION Carried away by security guards, or a holiday with Jackie, our Lindsey and little Kylie? Tough choice...

SPORT A-Z

Athletics ***www.athletix.gr***
Basketball ***www.nba.com***
Boxing ***www.boxingonline.com***
Cricket ***www.cricinfo.com***
Fishing ***www.fishing.org***
Football ***www.soccernet.com***
Golf ***Golf.com***
Hockey ***www.fieldhockey.com***
Martial Arts ***www.martial-arts-network.com***
Motorsport ***www.autosport.com***
Racing ***www.sporting-life.com***
Rugby League ***www.rleague.com***
Rugby Union ***www.rugby365.co.uk***
Skiing ***www.complete-skier.com***
Tennis ***www.tenniscountry.com***

STYLE AND FASHION

MAIN SITES

BeautyLink ***www.beautylink.com***
Boo.com ***www.boo.com***
Cosmopolitan ***www.cosmomag.com***
Elle ***www.ellemag.com***
Fashion And Beauty Internet Association ***www.fbia.com***
Fashion Icon ***www.fashion-icon.com***
Fashion Mall ***www.fashionmall.com***
FashionNet ***www.fashion.net***
Models.com ***www.models.com***
Style Experts ***www.stylexperts.com***
Vogue ***www.vogue.com***

TOP LABELS

Armani ***www.armaniexchange.com***
Benetton ***www.benetton.com***
Diesel ***www.diesel.co.uk***
DKNY ***www.donnakaran.com***
Gap ***www.gap.com***
Levi's ***www.levi.com***
Paul Smith ***www.paulsmith.co.uk***
Red or Dead ***www.redordead.co.uk***
Tommy Hilfiger ***www.tommypr.com***
Wrangler ***www.wrangler.com***

TELEVISION

TOP SHOWS

Big Breakfast ***bigbreakfast.channel4.com***
Brookside ***www.brookie.com***
Coronation Street ***www.coronationstreet.co.uk***
Eastenders ***www.bbc.co.uk/eastenders***
Friends ***friends.warnerbros.com***
Jerry Springer ***www.universalstudios.com/tv/jerryspringer/***
Neighbours ***www.baxendale.u-net.com/ramsayst/***
Teletubbies ***www.bbc.co.uk/education/teletubbies/tubbies.html***
X-Files ***www.thex-files.com***

TV COMPANIES

BBC ***www.bbc.co.uk***
Channel Four ***www.channel4.co.uk***
Channel Five ***www.channel5.co.uk***
ITV ***www.itv.co.uk***
Sky ***www.sky.co.uk***

TRAVEL

AIRLINES

Air Canada ***www.aircanada.ca***
Air France ***www.airfrance.com***
Air India ***www.airindia.com***
American Air ***www.americanair.com***
Britannia ***www.britanniaairways.com***
BA ***www.british-airways.com***
British Midland ***www.iflybritishmidland.com***
Continental ***www.flycontinental.com***
Easy Jet ***www.easyjet.com***
Go ***www.go-fly.com***
Iberia ***www.iberia.com***
KLM ***www.klmuk.com***
Lufthansa ***www.lufthansa.com***
Qantas ***www.qantas.com.au***
United Airlines ***www.ual.com***
Virgin Air ***www.virgin-atlantic.com***

DESTINATION GUIDES

Australia ***australia-online.com***
Caribbean ***www.caribbean-travel.com***
France ***www.franceway.com***
Germany ***www.germany-tourism.de***
Greece ***www.areianet.gr/infoxenios***
India ***www.indiagov.org***
Ireland ***www.shamrock.org***
Italy ***www.travel.it***
Japan ***www.jnto.go.jp***
Portugal ***www.portugal-web.com***
Spain ***www.spaintour.com***
UK ***www.visitbritain.com***
US ***www.go-unitedstates.com***

FERRIES

Ferry Savers ***www.ferrysavers.co.uk***
P&O ***www.poef.com/poef/index.htm***
Travel Britain ***www.travelbritain.com/UKPassengerFerries.html***
Travel.World ***www.travel.world.co.uk/ferries.htm***

RAIL TRAVEL

Euro Railways ***www.eurorailways.com***
Great Eastern Railway ***www.ger.co.uk***
Great Western Trains ***www.great-western-trains.co.uk***
Railtrack ***www.railtrack.co.uk***
Scotrail ***www.scotrail.co.uk***
UK Public Transport Information ***www.pti.org.uk***
Virgin Trains ***www.virgintrains.co.uk***

TRAVEL AGENTS

A2B ***www.a2btravel.com***
Airtickets ***www.airtickets.co.uk***
Bargain Holidays ***www.bargainholidays.com***
Biztravel ***www.biztravel.com***
Campus Travel ***www.campustravel.co.uk***
Cheap Flights ***www.cheapflights.co.uk***
Deckchair ***www.deckchair.com***
Expedia ***www.expedia.co.uk***
Internet Holidays ***www.holiday.co.uk***
Internet Travel Services ***www.itsnet.co.uk***
Last Minute ***www.lastminute.com***
STA Travel ***www.statravel.co.uk***
Thomas Cook ***www.thomascook.co.uk***
Thomson ***www.thomson-holidays.com***
Trailfinders ***www.trailfinder.com***
Travelocity ***www.travelocity.com***

WEBCAMS

DIRECTORIES

Allcam ***www.allcam.com***
Camcity ***www.camcity.com***
Digital Camera Network ***www.dcn.com***
Earthcam ***www.earthcam.com***
Webcam Central ***www.camcentral.com***
WebCam World ***www.webcamworld.com***

FAVOURITES

AfriCam ***www.africam.com***
Dealey Plaza Cam ***www.earthcam.com/jfk***
The Dolls' House ***www.bravo.co.uk/dolls***
FridgeCam ***www.electrolux.co.uk/show.asp?id=168***
Interactive Model Railroad ***rr-vs.informatik.uni-ulm.de***
Ultimate Taxi ***www.ultimatetaxi.com***

WEB CENSORS

Cyber Patrol ***www.cyberpatrol.com***
Net Nanny ***www.netnanny.com***
SmartAlex ***www.smartalex.com***
Surfin' Annette ***www.spycatcher.com***
Xcheck ***www.xcheck.net***
X-Stop ***www.xstop.com***

WEB DIRECTORIES

About.com ***www.about.com***
4anything ***www.4anything.com***
AOL Netfind ***www.aol.com/netfind***
DejaNews ***www.dejanews.com***
Excite ***www.excite.com***
Infoseek ***infoseek.go.com***
Liszt (Mailing lists) ***www.liszt.com***
LookSmart ***www.looksmart.com***
Open Directory Project ***www.dmoz.org***
UK Plus ***www.ukplus.co.uk***
WebCrawler ***www.webcrawler.com***
Yahoo! ***www.yahoo.com***
Yell ***www.yell.co.uk***

▶▶ www.autosport.com
for.racetrack.enthusiasts
AUTOSPORT
For the motor racing news updated throughout the day, live radio reports and personal e-mail, visit the new Autosport website.

Win flights with Ryanair

To celebrate the launch of its online site, Ryanair has teamed up with *the net* to offer readers the chance to win one of eight free pairs of tickets to either:

ITALY:

Turin, Genoa and Ancona

FRANCE:

Dinard (Brittany), Carcassonne and Biarritz

GERMANY:

Frankfurt

SWEDEN:

Stockholm

For the chance to win this fabulous prize, just answer the following question:

What is the name of the page on Ryanair's Web site where you will find the latest, best deals?

a) Top deals b) Hot deals c) Deals on wheels

E-mail your answer to competition@thenetmag.co.uk with the subject heading 'Ryanair competition' (don't forget to include your name and address)

or send it on a postcard to: Ryanair competition, the net, Haymarket Magazines Ltd., 38-42 Hampton Rd., Teddington, TW11 0JE.

If you are looking for the lowest flight prices, whether it's for a business trip or a short break, then look no further than

www.ryanair.com

Ryanair, Europe's largest low fares airline and the U.K's second largest airline, now has its own online booking site, which offers fast and efficient access to its low fares. Ryanair's Web site, devised by Equant, offers online access to unbeatable fares and offers a quick and easy browsing facility.

Ryanair's hassle-free system enables you to search for the widely available lowest fare to your destination for a specific day and, if it's not available, will search for five days either side. Or if you are travelling on business and need the option of flexibility to change your ticket, it will offer you the best price based on your need for flexibility. Also, there are no free meals on Ryanair flights and consequently their fares remain as low as possible.

Ryanair's route network: London Stansted to Kerry, Cork, Knock, Derry, Glasgow Prestwick, Pisa, Venice, Turin, Genoa, Ancona, Rimini, Carcassonne, Biarritz, St. Etienne, Dinard (Brittany) Frankfurt, Stockholm and Kristianstad and Oslo.

London Stansted, Gatwick, Luton, Bournemouth, Cardiff, Bristol, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds Bradford, Teesside and Glasgow Prestwick to Dublin. Glasgow Prestwick to Paris Beauvais.

Closing date for entries is Tuesday 30th November 1999. Flight tickets (for winner and guest) will be chosen from all the correct entries received by 30th November 1999. Tickets will be awarded to the first 8 correct entries drawn from all entries. Prize winners will be notified within 2 weeks of the closing date. Employees and their relatives of Ryanair or Haymarket Magazines Ltd. are not eligible to enter. No cash alternatives or substitute prizes will be allowed. Flights are subject to availability, are valid for six months and exclude peak periods. All transfers to and from designated airports (arrival and departure) are the winners' responsibility. Airport tax is included within the prize. The competition organisers reserve the right to supply a prize of similar value and specification if the named prize is unavailable. The decision of the organisers is final and no further correspondence will be entered into. Information on the winners of the competition will be available within two weeks of the published closing date and will be supplied upon the receipt of a stamped, self addressed envelope.

SEE HOW THEY LOOK THEN READ HOW THEY

DRIVE

New Audi TT
"It would have been easy for Audi to sell this car on looks alone, but it is also a handling sensation"

New BMW M5
"Quite simply, the most impressive high-performance luxury saloon we've ever driven"

New Jaguar S-type
"A saloon enthusiasts will relish driving. It will keep Jaguar fans more than happy but it also breaks important new ground"

New Rover 75
"The 75 is about effortless performance and smooth cruising ability. The ride quality is truly astounding"

AUTOCAR First for new cars every week

free serve

MAGAZINE

www.freeserve.net

£

The MONEY ISSUE

Cut your Net costs
Free connection for all

Shop on the Web
Buy on-line, save money

Sort your finances
From shares to savings

He's in the money
We give one Freeserve member £100,000

Plus
How to join, expert Net advice and more

16 pages that will change the way you use the Net

Welcome to Freeserve

Welcome to Freeserve. This special sixteen-page section will introduce you to the UK's largest free Internet service provider, and we guarantee there's something for everyone.

If you're a total Net novice we'll explain the basics, and our free start-up CD will give you everything you need to hit the Web. If you already have Internet access and want to switch to Freeserve, we'll show you how. And if you've already signed up, we'll help you get the most from your membership.

Our News section will bring you all the latest happenings in the Freeserve community, and our Channel Guide will explain and explore the amazing resources available on the Freeserve site. You'll get advice from our team of tech experts and we'll introduce you to members who are already making their mark on the Net. Over 1.3 million people have joined Freeserve. If you've signed up, you're already a valued member of Britain's biggest Internet community. And if you haven't joined yet, we're confident you soon will!

That's the tough choice facing the lucky Freeserve member who won our sensational summer cash giveaway. See News

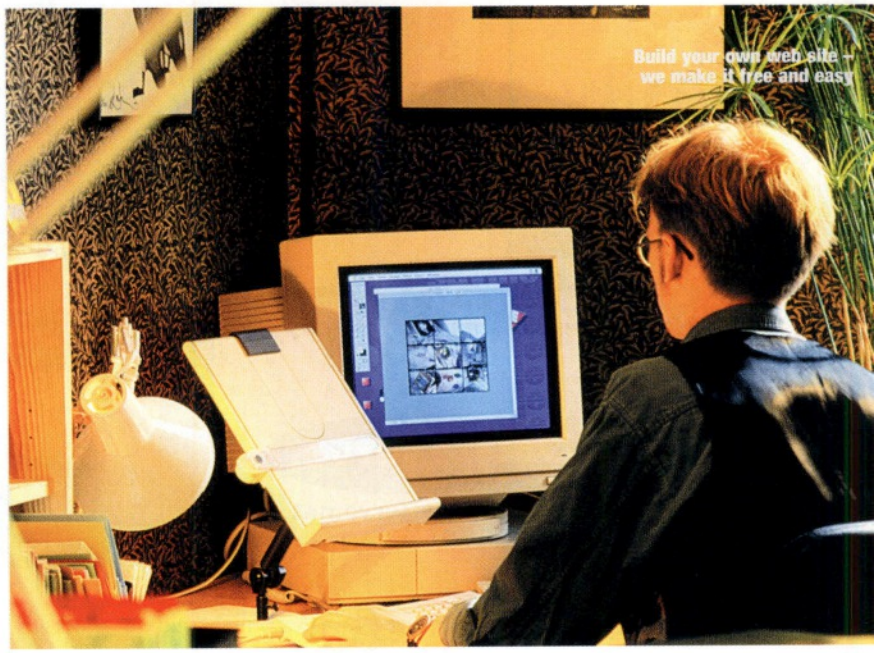
What would you do with £100,000?

Get e-mailing

When you sign up with Freeserve we'll give you a free e-mail account and as many individual e-mail addresses as you want. Your free start-up CD comes complete with Microsoft's Outlook Express, a great mail program that makes it easy to manage your messages. It's even easier to set up, as our installation wizard is designed to help those totally new to computers.

And once we've got you going, you'll never look back. You'll be able to keep in touch with friends and family anywhere in the world, sending them text messages and even sound and pictures files. You can enjoy personalised e-mail news and sport bulletins and take part in e-mail discussion groups.

It's a whole new way to communicate, and you can enjoy it free with Freeserve.



Build your own website

Your Freeserve Internet access gives you a window on the world. But you can also let the world see you, with your free 15 megabytes of web space.

Use it to create a website on any topic you wish — you can promote your business, create a site for your sports club or society or just tell the world about you.

Creating a website may seem complex, but Freeserve makes it simple. And you certainly don't need to be a computer expert.

The Freeserve site has stacks of hints and tips to help you make the most of your web space, and you can even register your own bespoke domain name online for a totally professional look.

The 'Space of my Own' feature later in the magazine will introduce you to two Freeserve members who have already started their web sites. and you can you use your free web access for inspiration!

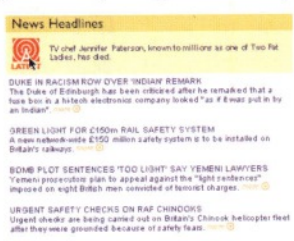
Shop on-line
Learn how Freeserve brings the High Street direct to your desktop
page viii

News, sport and shopping on-line

The Freeserve website is the centrepiece of our service. From our front page you can reach a vast range of news, entertainment, shopping and information.

You'll get the headlines as they happen and the latest financial data. Our lifestyle content will keep you occupied for hours and you can shop on-line for everything from gas to gadgets.

There are innovative resources like our Desktop Lawyer legal service and our comprehensive reference section. And our chat feature even lets you meet and talk to other Freeserve members on-line. Later in the section we'll give you a complete guide to the great content available on Freeserve, and there's a full rundown of all the shopping opportunities available on the site.


News Headlines
TV chef Jennifer Paterson, known to millions as one of Two Fat Ladies, has died.
DUKE IN RACISM ROW OVER 'INDIAN' REMARK
GREEN LIGHT FOR £150m RAIL SAFETY SYSTEM
BOMB PLOT SENTENCES 'TOO LIGHT' SAY YEMENI LAWYERS
URGENT SAFETY CHECKS ON RAF CHINOOKS

Spend a day with Freeserve and see the Net in a new way!

It really is free!

So where's the catch? Surely we can't just give you free e-mail, Internet access and web space? The good news is that we can and we do. You can pick up a free start-up CD from Dixons, PC World, Currys, The Link or @jakarta, or you can sign up via our website if you're already on-line.

And we'll never ask for a penny. All you'll pay is the cost of a local call – wherever you are in the country – to connect to our computers.

Welcome to Freeserve, the UK's No.1 for the Internet.

Pictures: Tony Stone Images

Family scoops £100k in our cash giveaway

free serve
www.freeserve.net

"When the limo turned up outside I knew it was for real," says winner

Imagine being woken up one morning with the news that you have just won £100,000. That's exactly what happened to lucky Freeserve member Paul Collins, who scooped the top prize in our sensational Summer cash giveaway.

"It's still sinking in now," said Paul as Freeserve Chief Executive John Pluthero presented him with a cheque at a champagne breakfast at the Ritz. "This will change our lives completely – we haven't thought what we'll do with it yet."

Thousands of Freeserve members from across the country entered the contest on-line via the Freeserve website. But Paul's name was the first to be drawn by our computer.

"At first I thought it was a wind-up," said the 32 year-old engineer from Bath. "But when a limo turned up to take us to London, I knew it was for real."

Paul collected his cheque with wife Sarah, a local hospital worker, children Amee, 4 and Caleb, 2 and mother-in-law Christine. They spent the day sightseeing from the luxury of their limo before heading to their bank to pay in the cheque.

"Once I see all those noughts on the end of my bank balance I suppose I'll have to decide what to do with it. We could pay off the mortgage and treat ourselves to a good holiday. I haven't decided."

Paul became a Freeserve mem-

"Freeserve takes the lead in offering the m

NEW ON FREESERVE

Check out some of our great new features

Giving chat a new dimension

Coming soon – a radical new development on the Freeserve Chat channel. We're going 3D, with users able to take on a character and move themselves around the room. It's just like virtual reality – you can take a look at them, and get chatting if you like what you see.
www.freeserve.net/chat

Meet your heroes on-line

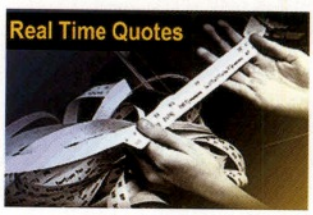
Freeserve's incredibly popular chat channel now lets you meet your heroes on-line, and ask them the questions you've always wanted answers to. A host of celebrities will be dropping in over the coming months, so be sure to check the calendar posted on the chat pages to avoid missing out.
www.freeserve.net/chat

Author James Dillar
5 pm ET/2 pm PT
Alternative medicine may very well outlast the Seattle sound from which it took its name.

In Concert: Deftones
8 pm ET/5 pm PT
They have a touch of the funk, but not enough to distract.

YACK! REVIEWS:

The Scrambler
This chat room/trivia game is a fun look into the dusty corners of the TV of yesteryear.



Be your own stockbroker

Thousands of new private investors come to the Stock Exchange every month, and most turn to the Internet for advice and information. Our Money channel delivers both, including a first-rate new service giving you instant access to live share prices, previously only available to brokers and City professionals. Investing has never been easier.
www.freeserve.net/money

Can that keyboard: send mail by phone

As we exclusively revealed last month, Freeserve has launched two revolutionary web-based communication tools. Telserve SpeechMail allows Freeserve users to access their e-mail by phone. You'll have your messages read to you by the Vocalis speech synthesizer, and when you're ready to reply you can dictate a message that will be sent as a sound file to the recipient. Telserve lets you manage all your messages, faxes and e-mails from one web based mailbox, and you can even organise conference calls and Internet presentations.

What will £100,000 let you buy?

Aston Martin DB7 Volante	£92,500
Farmhouse in Tuscany	£98,700
Converted warehouse apartment, London	£102,500
Rinker Fiesta Vee 330 fully fitted luxury cruise boat	£89,995
Dragonfly 333 helicopter	£80,000
Mercedes S600 V12 limo	£102,540

ber as soon as the service began.

"I use it all the time," he said. "I really like the chat service and all the information on the website, and I keep in touch with my friends by e-mail. My wife used to shout at me for spending so much time on-line, but I think I might be forgiven now!"

Eleven other Freeserve members also struck lucky. Second prize was a great two-centre holiday on the US West Coast, and ten runners-up won free telephone calls for a year.

Members benefit as Freeserve flotation is a runaway success

FREESERVE members have benefited from the success of the company's Stock Market flotation. Members were given priority in the allocation of retail shares, which were 30 times oversubscribed.

After registering on-line via the Freeserve website, lucky investors saw their shares rise rapidly in value. Early trading saw the company's value increase far above the initial £1.5 billion assessment.

"We are delighted by the vote of confidence given to Freeserve by investors worldwide. The flotation is another significant step towards our goal of being the UK's home on the Internet," said delighted Freeserve Chief Executive John Pluthero.

"This is a major advance in Freeserve's development. We have a strong market position and exciting plans for the future. Our flotation will enable us to build on our achievement so far and enhance significantly the service we offer Freeserve users."

Picture: Tony Stone Images

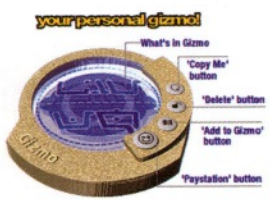
LATEST

Fantasy League comes to Net

FREESERVE has teamed up with Fantasy League to bring users a sensational new service. We'll be offering a total of £65,000 in prizes for wannabe Ron Atkinsons. You can organise a private league for your mates, or compete with virtual managers from across the country. There are quizzes and competitions, and a monthly 'Strike Force' contest to see who can spot soccer's top goal scorers. And best of all we'll be awarding prizes for manager of the month and the year – it's your chance to show what your management skills are made of. Who knows – when Sir Alex's contract is up, Man U might just turn to you!

ost useful and innovative Internet services"

John Pluthero, Chief Executive



We give you the greatest games

There are over 1200 software bargains available on-line via Freeserve's Shopping channel and @jakarta. You can use Gizmo, the revolutionary Net shopping assistant to help you find the product you're after, whether it's the latest console game or business software for your PC. You can pre-order popular new releases, and have everything delivered direct.

www.freeserve.net/shopping

Don't let buying a car drive you mad

The all-new motoring section on the Freeserve shopping channel brings you thousands of used car classified ads, updated daily. You can use our accurate search facility, or let us tell you when the right car comes along. There are 2,000 full road test reports, and you can bid in our on-line auction. Buying a car is a big decision – we'll give you the information to choose well.

www.freeserve.net/shopping

A dream of a competition

To celebrate the nationwide release of A Midsummer Night's Dream on September 24 we are teaming up with Twentieth Century Fox and Interflora to bring you a truly romantic competition. Answer a few simple questions and you could win free flowers for a year, and a private cinema screening of the film for you and 40 friends.

www.freeserve.net

Win a weekend for two in Paris

We've teamed up with Eurostar to give two lucky Freeserve members a fantastic weekend in the world's food capital. Our winners will travel first class on Eurostar and stay at the 3-star Forest Hill Hotel La Villette for two nights. The prize includes Continental breakfast and personal travel insurance. Just visit the site to enter!

www.freeserve.net/foodanddrink

Cruise our channels

Film and Cinema

If you're a major movie mogul we've got what you want. We cover all the latest cinema and video releases and go in heavy on the big blockbusters. Play games, read news and enter competitions – you'll be too busy to go to the movies!

Shopping

Here it is – from one page you can access all the great Net shopping facilities brought to you by Freeserve. If you want flowers or furniture, a car or a computer you'll find it here. Save time and money – just shop direct from your desktop!

News

Get tomorrow's papers today with our superb news service. You'll get all the latest UK and foreign stories supplied by the Press Association, together with tech and business news and a complete rundown of headlines from the national press.

Chat

Around the clock, thousands of members of the Freeserve Net community are logged onto our website. Now you can use our new chat rooms to meet them, talk about your favourite Freeserve features and maybe find a new friend!

Technology

The Freeserve on-line technology channel brings you the gadgets that will change your life. We'll show you the latest products and technologies, all set out in plain English. And when you're ready to buy, visit the Dixons on-line store on our shopping channel.

Domain names

Make the most of your free 15 megabytes of web space with our domain name service. If you're setting up a site for your business, club or just for yourself you can register your very own web address. You can choose a memorable name that reflects the content of your site, and see if it's available with our free search facility.

Sport

Whatever your sport, you'll find it covered on Freeserve. Rugby or Formula 1, cricket or golf; you can get the results and follow your heroes on the Sport channel.

Careers

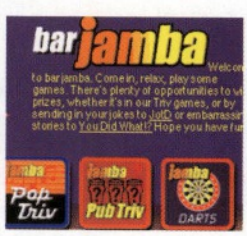
We've got the world of work wired. Our Careers channel lets you search databases of 70,000 jobs nationwide and even apply on-line. You can submit your CV and let employers who need your skills in your area seek you out. The way we find work is changing; let Freeserve help you make the most of it.

Football

Barmy about the beautiful game? Our Football channel caters for even the most obsessive fan. There's a complete results service, full table listings and statistics for clubs from the Premiership to the Conference. There's a full news service, a database of the top players and sections on all the top clubs. Freeserve's Football channel will make your season complete.

MUSIC

Whether it's Robbie Williams or Wagner we have news, reviews and event listings on everything musical. You can buy gig tickets and CDs on-line and take your time over our features and news stories. Sounds good.



FUN AND GAMES

Information overload? Relax. Just come to our Fun and Games channel to play all your favourite pub, trivia and card games. And if your brain's in gear you could win one of the host of prizes always on offer for our star performers.

Business

If you're going to succeed in business you'll need rapid and reliable information. You'll find it on Freeserve. We have all the latest figures on every major firm and financial instrument, along with comment and analysis from the best in business, including Motley Fool and the venerable Mrs. Cohen. We even cover foreign markets and personal finance.

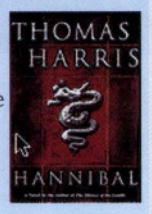
Communications

Use our Communications Channel to link straight to amazing phone savings. Presto Phone is a great Net-based telephone account that lets you save up to 33 per cent on domestic calls and up to an incredible 77 per cent on foreign calls. And our great Summer offer gives you 100 free minutes when you sign up.

free serve

www.freeserve.net

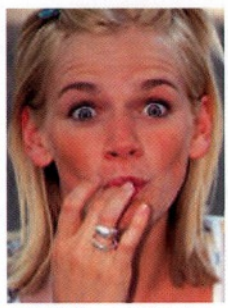
Books



Shopping for books can be hard on the feet and the wallet. Let BOL, our on-line bookshop take the weight off both, with up to 50 per cent off bestsellers. View our on-line bookshelves the way you want, sorting them by topic or author. When you're ready to buy you'll find easy ordering and rapid delivery. Book some time with BOL now.

Entertainment

Staying in? We've got TV listings and soap updates. Going out? We'll show you the best in theatre, cinema comedy and more near you, with times, prices and venues.



▲ Zoe Ball ... wedding day countdown

TV And Radio

Not only do we give you full TV and radio listings specific to your region, but our critics will even advise you what to watch if you just can't decide. But only if you can tear yourself away from Freeserve!

TV Listings

BBC1
(last updated Tue, August 1

6.00 AM **Business internation**

Horoscopes

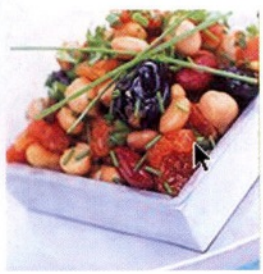
Let a star read your stars! Our celebrity astrologer Russell Grant offers daily, weekly and monthly readings for all the star signs. You can take him seriously or with a pinch of salt, but we predict you'll enjoy his predictions!

Travel

Click on Freeserve's travel channel for instant access to our database of 70,000 flights and holidays worldwide. There are always sensational last-minute deals on offer, and you can make separate car hire and hotel reservations. If you're staying in the UK you'll find our train schedules and mileage calculator invaluable. You can even find your way on Freeserve!

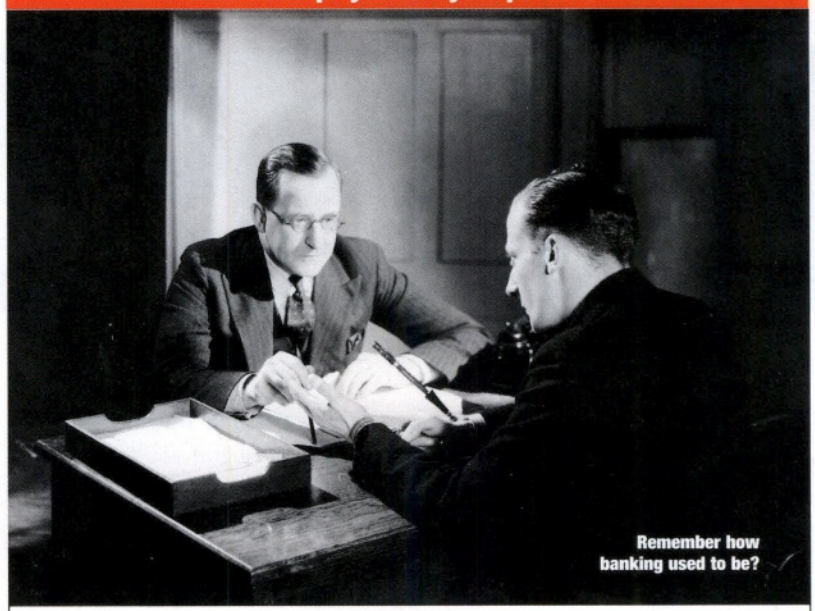
Food And Drink

From recipes to restaurant guides and cocktails to competitions – let Freeserve feed your food fetish!



FOCUS

How Freeserve helps you sort your personal finances



Remember how banking used to be?

Today, we're more aware of our personal finances than ever before. We're choosier about the financial products we buy. When we save or borrow we want the best rates, but great customer service and convenience, too. We plan for our retirements. And an increasing number of people invest in shares, and take an active interest in the workings of the City.

The Internet is both a source of information and a direct means of arranging your finances. You can do both with Freeserve – you might even find that you don't need to go eslewhere. Here's our guide to Freeserve's personal finance content.

The Business Channel

Our business content is second to none. The information is designed to appeal to businesspeople and investors alike. **Business News** will bring you up-to-date on the latest interest rate moves and the headlines from the City. It's information you'll need to manage your investments wisely, no matter what their value. **The Market Roundup** and **Stocks on the Move** features will bring you analysis from the exchanges, and the in-depth **Company Focus** will give you the low-down on firms you may be thinking of investing in.

Less specialist investors will want to check out our daily **Personal Finance** article, which deals with everything from mortgages to mobile phone bills. And if you want to start investing in more complex products we'll get you started. You can follow the plain English advice of TV's Mrs. Cohen, or the ten steps for beginners from the never foolish Motley Fool. If you're an Internet buff you'll want to read our **Net Report.**

Free Real Time Quotes

Register as a premier user with UKInvest, our business content partner and you'll be able to access **live share prices** for free, a facility usually only enjoyed by traders and an invaluable resource for active private investors. You can arrange to **track your portfolio** as a group or individually, and get an instant valuation.

Net Credit Card

Coming soon, another first from Freeserve. In association with HFC Bank, the people behind Goldfish, we're introducing a web-based credit card, allowing you to access account details and deal with payments and queries on-line. It's the perfect way to pay for your on-line shopping, and far more convenient and simple than traditional cards.

Personal Loans

If you're looking for a loan the Net is a great place to start, allowing you to get interactive quotes and play with loan amounts and periods to find repayments that suit you. Freeserve members can get special personal loan rates from Hamilton Direct Bank. Once you've decided what you want you'll be taken through the on-line loan application step-by-step, and you'll receive a decision the same working day.

Desktop Lawyer

It's best to have all your financial arrangements set out clearly. Whether it's a tenancy agreement on your investment property, or a will to ensure your loved ones are looked after, you can get legal documents – and peace of mind – with Desktop Lawyer. Download our ready-prepared documents and you'll save on solicitors fees.

Empics, UPPA, Hulton Getty

theshopping channel

Connect to our travel channel and you'll be able to access 70,000 holiday deals on-line. We'll give you the best last-minute offers, and let you search our vast database for your ideal combination of dates and destination. We'll find your ideal holiday – just remember to send a postcard. Bon voyage!

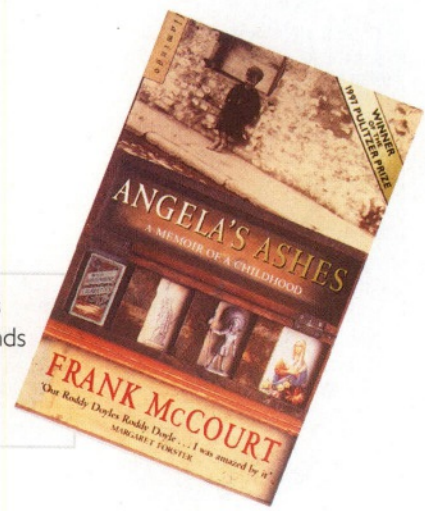
The Pet's Pyjamas is a leading home shopping pet care firm. Thanks to Freeserve you can now order food, accessories and healthcare supplies on-line – everything you need to pamper your pet, delivered direct to your door at great savings!

We've got the hardware you need to speed up your surfing, along with 2,000 other electrical goods. It's all brought to you by Dixons, one of Britain's leading retailers, with 24 hour ordering and next working day delivery.

Our Drinks channel brings the world's wines to your desktop. There's a fantastic selection always available, and if we haven't got it we'll do our best to find it! Our presentation cases make great gifts.

Are you sitting comfortably? If not, come to our Furniture channel and check out 70 items designed to ensure that your computer and files are kept safe, secure and well-organised, and that you can surf in luxury!

Use Gizmo, your electronic, customisable personal shopping assistant to get the most from our fantastic Software channel, in conjunction with @jakarta. We have the full range of software for PC, DVD and all the consoles, with everything from beat-'em-ups to business software.



You can browse our on-line book shelves and choose from thousands of titles. Ordering is simple and delivery is rapid, and you can save pounds on High Street prices. Looking for a book is one of life's real pleasures, and now you can do it anytime, direct from your desktop.

Freeserve's Shopping Channel is unique. From one page you can access a vast range of goods and services from the biggest names in Internet retailing. You can order with confidence: confident that your order is secure, confident that it will be dispatched quickly and confident that you're getting the very best bargains. Whatever you want, you'll find it on Freeserve.

Football crazy? The Sport department of Freeserve's shopping channel lets you connect direct to the on-line stores of 18 leading teams. You can order kit, accessories, memorabilia and other merchandise, as well as keeping up-to-date on the latest events at your favourite club. It's just like going to the ground!

free serve

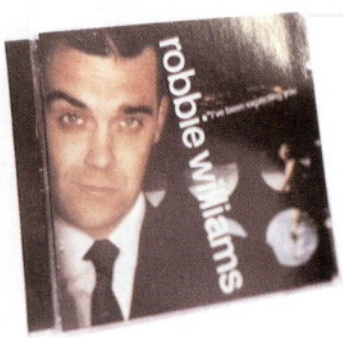
www.freeserve.net

Freeserve's Motoring channel brings you great content from Exchange and Mart. Access a massive database of deals on new and used cars, searching by make, price and location to find a set of wheels that suits you!

Need to sort out your finances? Freeserve's Personal Finance Channel brings you all the major financial products and services from a range of respected firms. From credit cards to life assurance and mortgages, you'll find advice you like and rates you'll love.

In trouble? Need to say sorry? Interflora makes it easy, with same-day delivery to many of the 146 countries we cover. And if you're stuck for inspiration, check out our list of the nation's top ten favourite flowers.

Freeserve always brings you the sweetest deals, and the sweetest of all are on our Chocolate Channel. In association with Thornton's, the UK's premier High Street confectioner we let you order your treats on-line, and we'll even deliver direct to a loved one.



Our music coverage is second to none. The Music channel brings you CDs at fantastic savings, with a choice that no record shop can match. And you can search for gigs in your town and order tickets on-line.

Working out how to save money on your utility bills is a confusing business. You can choose how to get your gas, water and electricity, and our Utilities feature lets you work out which supplier offers the best value in your area. We'll even help you save on your mobile!

From an office in the heart of a rejuvenated Leeds, a team of young Internet producers and designers has put together something that's more than just a website. We meet the team behind Freeserve

Building the site that brings you the world

Media Development Director Rob Wilmot: "Education is what the Net is all about."

Rob Wilmot is a happy man. He has every reason to be. From an (often) immaculate office he looks out over The Calls, an area in central Leeds that rivals London's Docklands as a model of urban regeneration. The restored warehouses and factories house brasseries, health clubs and the hi-tech industries that have brought new life to the area. Rob can take some credit for that, because his outfit is the most successful of the new media firms The Calls is now home to. The area's cobbled streets and weathered brickwork may be old-fashioned, but the thinking is anything but.

"I wouldn't like to put a figure on the total number of pages we provide. There are over 18,000 in the encyclopaedia alone"

Looking the other way, out through the glass walls and doors of his office, Rob can see some of the team that have helped him succeed. The office is airy with wooden floors and white walls, and the dress code is casual. But don't be fooled – these people mean business. As Freeserve's Media Development Director Rob and his team have built one of the country's finest, most comprehensive web sites. Not bad for a man who started his career working in the housing department of Doncaster Council.

"Actually, you won't meet a lot of the team members, even though we're working with them right now. We do a lot of virtual working here. Many of our partners are based overseas, so we rely on the Net, e-mail and teleconferencing. We try to practice what we preach." He's right — in a meeting room at the far end of the office two of his colleagues are holding an on-line conference with a team of engineers in China.

New, efficient ways of working are part of the reason the Freeserve site has been such as huge success. Rob and his team started work just nine months before Freeserve launched in September '98, and now the site is immense. "I wouldn't like to put a figure on the number of pages we provide. There are 18,000 in our encyclopaedia alone, so that should give you an idea.

"The ideas that underlie the site are based on a mixture of exhaustive research and gut instinct. "We looked at all the major sites and

free serve

www.freeserve.net

analysed what was missing. Then we looked closely at what potential Freeserve members would want. But we also relied on our own natural feeling for what a really great website would consist of."

And the answer was – everything! "I think our unique selling point is that you can find so much in one place. There's an incredible richness of content, and it's presented in a way that's consistent and simple to use. And we deliver so much of it absolutely free of charge. Our on-line learning software is a really fantastic service. We have exam revision software that will tell you how you have improved and what to concentrate on next. It's invaluable if you're trying to pass a GCSE, and yet it's free."

It's the educational content that Rob is most proud of, not surprising for a man who put himself through a degree in electronic imaging and ended up winning IBM's coveted Leonardo da Vinci award for multimedia work.

"For me, it's what the Internet is all about. It's interactive, it really teaches you and it's free. I'm also very proud of our domain name registration service. It takes a procedure that used to be complex and makes it easy."

"But I suppose the best thing is that people come back. They get used to buying their books on-line and they stay with us."

And what those users think about the site is an important factor in the way it develops. Comments from callers to Freeserve's Technical Helpline are fed back to the team at Leeds, and many end up on the bosses' desk.

"The users are listened to. They know best. Their opinions really do affect what we do."

"We want our people to understand how the stuff they do works in the real world. They have to be creative and perceptive"

But it's the real experts that do the work. At the Leeds office a team of producers select the content for the site. Designers turn it into attractive web pages, and the technical gurus make sure the site can cope with the strain of millions of users. They're drawn from a wide range of backgrounds, from Oxbridge graduates to guys who left school at sixteen.

"We're not just looking for technical expertise in the people we employ," says Rob. We want them to understand people's needs, and how the stuff they do works in the real world. They have to be creative and perceptive. And although we've got some great people, we're still looking!"

Anyone with Net access can view the Freeserve site from anywhere in the world, but the content is closely aimed at Freeserve users. There are facilities – such as the on-line help function – that subscribers will find invaluable. But the site also exists to create a sense of community among members, something that has been at the heart of the site's mission since it began. "The chat feature has been incredibly successful. You get immense numbers of people using it – a really amazing mix. And the same people come back time and again, which is a mark of its success."

And what does the future hold? "Personalization is a big buzzword in the Net, and it's certainly something Freeserve is looking at." He's cagey about specifics — you'll have to keep visiting the site. "We'll also be debuting a lot more innovative web-based tools and services to encourage people to visit the site and stay on it." Not that they need much encouragement now.

Space of my Own

Freeserve lets you create your own website free. But what do you publish, and how difficult is it to produce? Two car nuts will show you how they built their sites, and there are great web tips from our design expert

The Porsche Enthusiasts Club

You might think that having a gleaming Porsche sitting on your drive would stop you surfing the Net. Why spend your time sitting at a computer when you could be behind the wheel of a supercar?

But Porsche owners are an enthusiastic lot. They don't just want to drive their cars; they want to learn about their history, meet fellow owners, get help on technical matters and more besides.

Freeserve member and Porsche nut Mathew Davies realised this. He's a systems analyst with a major retailer, and is already on his third Porsche, a red 924 Turbo. As the London regional organiser of the Porsche Enthusiasts Club he saw that a website was just what the club needed to help members across the country keep in touch. He used his free space to build a site, and hasn't looked back.

"Since I set up the site in the New Year we've had over 11,000 accesses in total, and up to a hundred people use the site every day," says Mathew. "Around 20 per cent of our new members join after finding us on the Internet. It has been invaluable for the club"

The site boasts an impressive range of features. There are histories of Porsche's cars and racing achievements, contact details for local organisers and advice on technical issues and insurance. There are over 30 cars for sale, and a library of members' motors. It's an impressive piece of work for a first-time web designer.

"It only took me about a week to get the site up and running," says Mathew. "I used Microsoft Front Page to help put the site together, and PhotoShop for the images, although other programs would do just as well. It's really quite easy to get the hang of – a lot of people think it isn't. You just need to make a start."

And as his skills have developed, Mathew has become more adventurous. Recent additions to the site include an interactive game, a clip of Porsches in action at Le Mans and a chat room.

"As I learn something new I add it to the site. The chat room has been a real success – once a month members from around the country get together on-line, and we even get people dropping in from the States. Previously, we could only meet people from our region at the monthly meetings."

"More and more members are getting on-line, so the site will become even more. valuable. I've had so much positive feedback – it's been great!"

His work on the site may even boost his career. His web design skills have allowed him to get involved in his firm's website, and he's considering becoming a full-time webmaster. But it's his love of Porsches that really motivates him. He even spends his Saturdays getting his hands dirty at ia Porsche garage learning all about the technical aspects.

"I've loved cars since I was at school. Porsches are just so fantastic to drive – on a racetrack you can put your foot down at 90 and there's still so much power there. There are plenty of owners who fit the typical playboy image of sports car owners. But you can have a good example for just a few thousand pounds, and they are actually quite economical to run. A major service can cost the same as you'd pay for a Peugeot."

"Porsches are so fantastic – on a racetrack you can put your foot down at 90 and there's still so much power there"

And you know which car you'd rather be seen in, don't you?

www.porsche-enthusiasts-club.freeserve.co.uk

www.freeserve.net

Porschembri

Patrick Schembri has been in the Porsche business for 20 years. As an independent specialist much of his business comes on personal recommendation from loyal and satisfied customers. He's always busy, and his workshop is filled with a wide variety of Porches, from the latest exotica to hard-working racing machines. It's never quiet; if it isn't the roar of a plane skimming the roof as it approaches Heathrow, it's the deep bark of a well-tuned Porsche engine firing up.

Inspired by fellow enthusiast Mathew Davies' success on the Internet, Patrick decided to establish his own site with Matt's help. As the owner of a small business, Patrick believes it's important to keep costs down until you have established your company's web strategy.

That's where Freeserve's free web space proved invaluable. "We can put all our prices and services on the website, and people can see where we are. It makes everything simpler for the customer, and it brings in business we wouldn't have had otherwise."

The site has pages for each of Patrick's services, such as inspections for prospective buyers and specialist MOTs. Visitors can download a map, check out Porsche links and e-mail Patrick at his Freeserve address.

He has definitely been convinced of the value of the Net. In fact, he has designed an innovative new product, which he plans to market and sell direct from his site. It's under wraps for now, but watch this space...

www.porschembri.freeserve.co.uk

James Lawrence designs the Freeserve website. He's just the man to help you produce a great site, whether you're a novice or a Net expert

Have a plan

It's best to work out what you want to do with your site before you start. You can just use your web space to put up pictures of your holidays. But it's better to do something that people will really be interested in – maybe a site about the place you visited, so other people thinking of going there can find out about it.

Keep it simple

I think it's best to avoid having lots of unnecessary graphics attached to your page. Keep it simple. That way it will download more quickly – if it takes ages people might get bored and go elsewhere. I'll just move on if a page is taking too long too appear. Also, pages look better if they are simple and uncluttered. It's best not to use background files, animation and other graphics unless they're really necessary and genuinely useful.

Make it logical

Work out how you're going to present and structure the information. Make it easy for people to navigate through your site – if they get lost or confused they might just go elsewhere. A 'home' button taking people back to the main page is essential. I think frames are a really useful addition to a personal site. It makes it clear where you are, so I think it's worth learning how to use them. Make sure they look the same in all the major browsers.

Learn the basics

There are lots of programs that will help you build your website, but it's worth learning some HTML, the computer language used to produce sites. It's actually very simple, and there are lots of sites on the Internet that will help. Once you understand how HTML works, you can look at the source code of sites that you really admire and see how they have been constructed. You can even pinch bits of code you particularly like and paste them into your site.

Choose books wisely

It's nice to have a guide to web design and HTML on paper as you work. But technology moves so rapidly that in the time it takes to write a book and print it, the content may already be out of date. Most of the resources you'll need are out there on the Net, and you can get started on the Freeserve site with the on-line help function. You can always print out the advice if you think you'll need it frequently.

Get registered

It's worth putting some effort into getting your site registered with the search engines. It will have a big impact on the number of people accessing your pages. And when you are designing the site, remember to include meta-tags in your code. These are hidden descriptions and keywords that let search engines match your site to their search requests. They're easy to include, and will really improve your hit rate.

Get software

If you're really serious about producing a great site, you might want to think about investing in some web authoring tools. They'll help you produce a really slick site and cope with some of the more advanced, multimedia stuff you can do on the Web. Have a look at programs like Macromedia Dreamweaver –you can often download free trial versions to see if you find it useful.

Pictures: Anthony Cullen

Your on-line guru

You're already on-line with Freeserve, and now you're ready for some expert hints and tips to speed up your surfing. Freeserve's Technical Producer Gavin Sweet gives you the low-down on everything from modems to multimedia

Sort out your modem

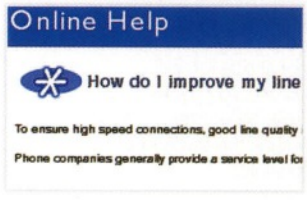
The most important thing to get right is your modem. Everything you do on the Net passes through it, and a poor connection will really slow you down. With a standard phone line you can connect to Freeserve at up to 56 kilobytes per second. Your modem may say that it's capable of operating at 56kb, but for your computer to talk to our computers at top speed it needs to be V90 compliant – it's a special modem standard for optimum data transmission. Look for that on the packaging, or ask before you buy.

It's also best to avoid a winmodem, which draws on your computer's processing power. All external modems work independently, but if you're buying an internal one – or a computer with a modem already fitted – ask before you buy.

If your modem is slower than 56kb and you don't want to upgrade – don't worry! Although Freeserve offers full 56 kb connections, our modems will accommodate everyone, and you'll generally get the fastest connection your hardware can handle.

Sort out your phone line

Listen carefully next time you make a phone call. If there's any


Online Help
How do I improve my line
To ensure high speed connections, good line quality
Phone companies generally provide a service level fo

hissing or crackling in the background you have a poor quality line, and the speed at which you connect to the Net will be affected. If you always seem to connect to the Net at different speeds you may also have a problem.

Call your phone company and tell them about it, and they'll usually be able to do something to improve the line's quality.

Ask your phone company if you are on a digital exchange. If you are, you can have your line optimised for data, which can speed up your connection considerably. It's worth doing if you spend a lot of time on the Net and download a lot of data.

Sort out your memory

If you have a lot of programs running your computer will slow down as its random access memory (RAM) gets tied up. Before you connect to Freeserve, close down any other programs – such as Word – that you are working on. In general, the fewer programs you have running on your system at any one time, the faster it will carry out commands.

You might want to check your mail first, then close down Outlook and move onto the Web. The faster your computer can understand the data it receives, the less time you'll spend on-line.

Most new computers come with more RAM than you'll need for regular surfing. But if you have an older machine or want to get warp speed connections you might want to consider adding more RAM, or even upgrading to a new machine.

Sort out your software

The software that comes on the Freeserve start-up CD-ROM gives you everything you need to start e-mailing and accessing the Web. We now include software to help

you make the most of the Web's multimedia content. There are three programs you ought to have to ensure that you get the most from the more advanced sites. Realplayer (www.real.com) and Quicktime (www.quicktime.com)

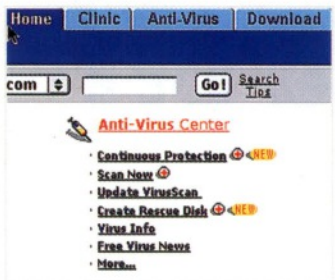
will let you access live or on-demand audio and video and use 3D panoramic pictures.

Shockwave (www.shockwave.com) lets you see on-line animation and get the most from the Web's interactive features.

Visit the sites and click to download the software. Just follow the instructions – you don't need any specialist knowledge. Once installed, these programs will run automatically when you access a site that makes use of them.

Sort out your security

Everyone is aware of the dangers of viruses. The Freeserve start-up CD-ROM will come with a trial version of the McAfee virus protection software, and it's worth upgrading to the full version (www.mcafee.com). Even if you're not on the Net you should have an anti-virus program – there's a risk every time you exchange a file – on a floppy disk, for example.



Most viruses come as attachments to e-mails. The basic rule is not to open anything you're uncertain about. The virus won't be triggered until you open the file, so if you get a suspect attachment just stick it in your wastebasket and it won't harm your computer. If in doubt, just bin it – far better to lose one e-mail than the entire contents of your hard disk.

It's important to ensure that your e-mail program doesn't automatically open attachments without asking you first. In Outlook Express, choose 'options' from the drop-down menus, then select 'attachments' and check the high security option.

Sort out the Spam

Spam is irritating, useless junk e-mail sent in bulk, usually trying to sell you something. The best way to stop it is to avoid giving your e-mail address when visiting sites or posting to newsgroups.

On the web, don't be afraid to enter your e-mail address if you need to be sent passwords, confirmations or updates. Reputable sites shouldn't pass on your address, or will at least give you the option.

HELP IS AT HAND

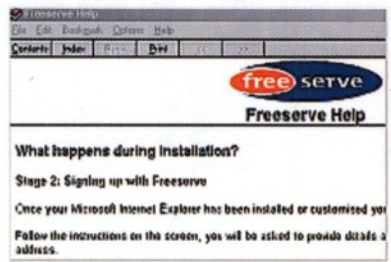
Luis Ogando, Senior Consultant on our Helpline explains how to get your questions answered instantly

What are my options?

If you're new to the Net, Freeserve is committed to making it as easy as possible for you to get on-line. So we've included a comprehensive Help feature with the Freeserve start-up CD-ROM, and redesigned our on-line help section on the website. You can turn to Freeserve and get a straight answer, straight away.

How do I use the CD-ROM help?

When you put the Freeserve CD in your machine you'll be given four options. The help button takes you to a comprehensive set of Net answers. There's a content guide, an alphabetical index of topics and a find function – all designed to take you straight to the answer you need. Separate sections deal with everything you need to know to avoid problems before set-up, and tell you what to expect as you begin to install Freeserve on your machine.



How does the on-line help work?

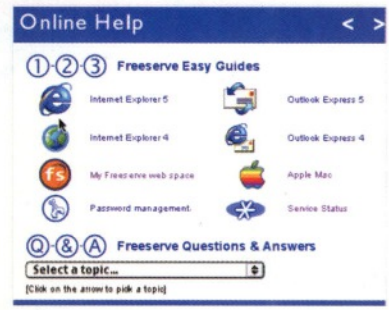
It's easy. There are four main sources of information. Read through the descriptions below and you'll soon see which best suits the type of query you have. Then get on-line and get your questions answered.

The glossary

If there's an Internet expression you don't understand, turn to our glossary first. It's more than likely to be there, with hundreds of other technical terms.

The Easy Guides

If there's one area of your Internet use that is causing you difficulty, turn to our Easy Guides for a complete solution. Here you'll find answers sorted by subject.

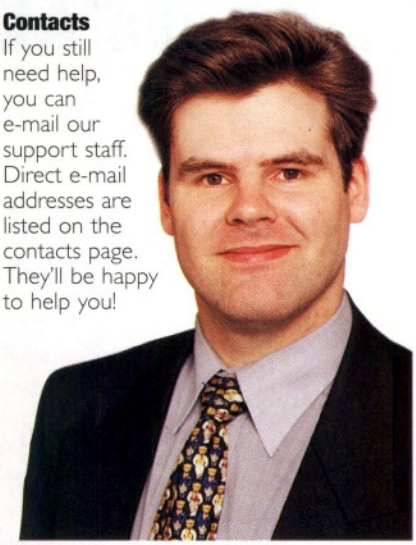


Questions and Answers

If there's a specific question you need answered, turn to our Q&A section for rapid help. First select the general area of your query from our drop-down menu, then your specific question. We've looked closely at the kinds of questions our members neeed answered, so you're sure to find an answer.

Contacts

If you still need help, you can e-mail our support staff. Direct e-mail addresses are listed on the contacts page. They'll be happy to help you!



Pictures: Matthew Ward, Anthony Cullen

free serve Online Help < > X

HELP IS AT HAND

www.freeserve.net/cserve

free serve

www.freeserve.net

Using Freeserve couldn't be simpler, but from time to time you might have a question for one of our experts. To help you get the most out of your connection, Freeserve's Technical Support is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Our trained staff can provide you with instant answers in plain English on a range of Net subjects. Calls cost 50p per minute

PC Support **0906 2517517**
Mac Support **0906 7234000**

MORE AND MORE PEOPLE ARE TAKING OFF WITH US

Over one million people surf the net with Freeserve. Our fast, reliable service and unique homepage provides instant benefits including:

- Top 10 CDs from £9.99 (including free UK delivery)
- Up to the minute financial & company information
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- Free legal document for all Freeserve members
- Last minute holidays and weekend breaks
- The latest news, sport and weather

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Sign up on-line now or pick up a free CD at any branch of Dixons, PC World, Currys or The Link.

Internet access is subject to standard local call rates.

stepbystep

From chatting online to sending email, you can find out more about it here. Plus, this month we put Net nanny software to the test and find out which browser is best

Your technical problems well sorted with our easy-to-follow guide to the Net

WHAT IS THE INTERNET?

The Internet is a huge global network of computers, with literally millions of machines connected together across the planet.

HOW DO I GET ON IT?

All you really need is a computer, a modem, an Internet service provider (ISP) and a telephone line.

WHAT CAN I DO THERE?

1 **Surf the Worldwide Web.**
2 Send someone an email.
3 **Take part in a newsgroup discussion.**
4 Make friends and get chatting with people from all over the world.

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The definitive guide to choosing the best ISP

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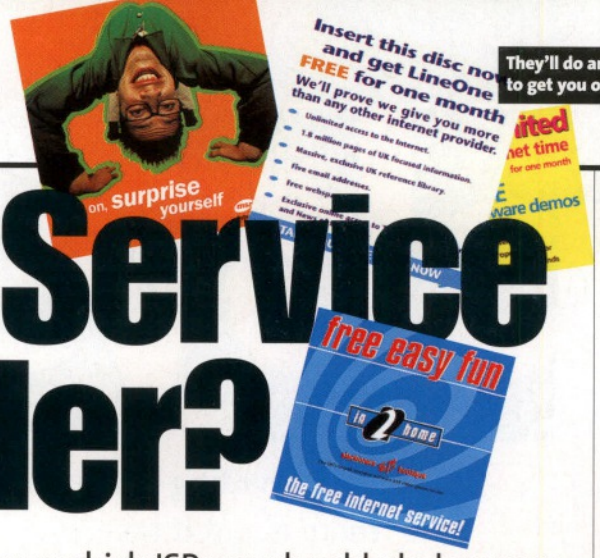

surprise yourself
Insert this disc now and get LineOne FREE for one month
We'll prove we give you more than any other Internet provider.
free easy fun
the free internet service!

They'll do anything to get you online

What Service Provider?

September 1999 Struggling over which ISP you should pledge your allegiance to? Then look no further than our service provider guide

What is an ISP?

An Internet service provider, or ISP, is a company that connects you to the Internet. All you need do is exploit the provider's permanent Net connection by connecting to it.

Get the best ISP deal

Right now, literally hundreds of ISPs are vying for your business – which is great news for consumers. But to help you make a truly informed decision, we've tested the best service providers on the market.

Below, you'll find our ratings for the current crop of the best ISPs looking to connect you. There are several companies that are now trialling completely free access – and that includes the price of the phone call that connects you to the Internet. LocalTel pioneered this service back in the spring with the launch of Screaming.Net. But there is a catch – in order to qualify for the free calls, Screaming.Net users must change over to LocalTel from their existing telephone company.

This new breed of ISP is set to change the landscape of Net access in the UK, as several other service providers investigate the possibility of offering completly free access in a bid to keep up with the new trends. In other words, the future couldn't be brighter for Net consumers, as the price of getting online continues to go down and down.

Call costs

Before you start, it's worth checking how much you'll be paying for the phone calls that connect you to the Net. Nearly every ISP charges local call rates. For BT customers, this means 4p/min on weekdays between 8am-6pm, 1.5p/min during off peak times, and 1p/min at the weekend. If you are with a cable service, then it's best to check with the individual company.

Speeding up

If you've read our news story on BT's ADSL this month, you'll know it offers data delivery speeds of 10-40 times a conventional modem. At the moment, most modems operate at 56kbps (kilobits per second) or less. Also available, of course, is ISDN (Integrated Services Digital Network), which can transmit data at speeds of up to 128kbps. For more on ADSL, see page 6.

BEGINNER'S TIP

Put the phone number you use to dial up to the Internet on your BT Friends and Family list.

INTERMEDIATE TIP

Set up several free accounts. If for any reason you cannot connect to one provider, simply try another one. There's no limit to how many accounts you have.,

ADVANCED TIP

Consider installing an extra phone line. It means you can have one for the phone and one for your modem, so you can use the Internet as much as you like.

INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDERS

ISP NAME	WEB ADDRESS	DESCRIPTION	TYPE OF SERVICE
Aardvark **FREE**	**www.aardvaak.co.uk**	London-based ISP with an emphasis on corporate clientele	Unlimited
AngliaNet Limited	**www.anglianet.co.uk**	Dial-up, web hosting and design for home and business users	Unlimited
AOL	**www.aol.co.uk**	A large ISP offering proprietary software to try to make connecting to the painless	Unlimited
Aviators Network	**www.aviators.net**	An ISP designed with aircraft related content for the pilot and the enthusiast	Unlimited
BREATHE **FREE**	**www.breathe.co.uk**	Well-established free ISP. Easy-to-use site design	Unlimited
BIGWIG **FREE**	**www.bigwig.net**	Free Internet access in a complete package. Clear and well presented	Unlimited
BT Click **FREE**	**www.btclick.com**	Designed for experienced users (no tech support).	Pay As You Go
BT Internet	**www.btinternet.com**	Another Internet arm of BT offering a full access package	Unlimited
Cable and Wireless net Lite **FREE**	**www.cwcom.net**	Service allowing CW customers free access. A subscription model exists which offers free calls	Unlimited
CALLNET **FREE**	**www.callnetuk.com**	Innovative free ISP offering enhanced web based services	Unlimited
CIX	**www.cix.co.uk**	The Compulink Information eXchange. Provides Internet conferencing accounts	Unlimited
ClaraNET Ltd	**www.clara.net**	Subscription based ISP with a range of account options to suit any needs	Unlimited
Connect Free **FREE**	**www.connect-free.net**	One of the first ISPs to connect people to the Net for free	Unlimited
Compuserve	**www.compuserve.com**	Long-standing ISP who offer proprietary software to aid ease-of-use and level of service	Unlimited
Currantbun **FREE**	**www.currantbun.com**	The free ISP offering of 'The Sun' Newspaper	Unlimited
CYBERphile Internet	**www.cyberphile.co.uk**	Business-oriented, Midlands based provider. Specialists in leased lines, LANs, firewalls, ISDN etc	Unlimited
Dabsol **FREE**	**www.dabsol.net**	Free ISP with online sign-up help and comprehensive features	Unlimited
Demon Internet	**www.demon.co.uk**	The UK's original dial-up account today aspires to be the industry's 'Premium' service	Unlimited
Direct Connection	**www.dircon.net**	Home and business ISP offering global roaming amongst their services	Unlimited
Easynet Ltd	**www.easynet.net**	Subscription based dial-up service. Winner of best European ISP at this year's ISPA awards	Unlimited
EidosNet **FREE**	**www.eidosnet.co.uk**	EidosNet is brought to you by Eidos, publishers of Tomb Raider and other great games	Unlimited
Enterprise plc	**www.enterprise.net**	Subscription based ISP with a host of features including game and news servers	Unlimited
F9 Free **FREE**	**www.f9.net.uk**	Free ISP from previously subscription only service Force 9	Unlimited
FirstWeb	**www.first-web.co.uk**	ISP based in Middlesex. Provides Internet solutions for businesses	Unlimited
FREE 4 ALL **FREE**	**www.free4all.co.uk**	Free ISP with online registration. C&W backbone and a commitment to free access/tech support	Unlimited
Free Internet **FREE**	**www.free-internet.co.uk**	Free access, free mail and Web space. Comprehensive service in a neat package	Unlimited
FREENET **FREE**	**www.freenet.co.uk**	More free access with a gaming bias. Online auto sign-up and newsgroups add to the interest	Unlimited
Free Online **FREE**	**www.free-online.net**	Straightforward free ISP offering news and email	Unlimited
Freeserve **FREE**	**www.freeserve.net**	Free provider from the Dixons group of companies	Unlimited

ISPs explained Using our easy-to-follow guide

FREE CONNECTIONS
There are now many companies that will get you onto the Internet without charging a subscription fee – the only thing you pay for is the price of the phone call that connects you.

SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES
Despite the plethora of free ISPs springing up, there are still many which charge a flat monthly fee. These generally offer free technical support, whereas most free ISPs charge by the minute.

CONTENT PROVIDERS
Content providers also charge to get you online, but provide exclusive content to members, and a sense of 'community'.

How the tables work

Description
A brief description of the services offered by the ISP in question.

Type of service
Tells you whether there is any restriction on how often you can use the Internet.

Phone number
The number to ring if you want to sign up.

Email addresses
Some service providers give you only one email address, others provide as many as you want.

Content
Outlines whether the service provider in question provides its own content and whether it is exclusive to its users.

Macintosh support
Not all service providers offer software and technical support for Macs, preferring to concentrate on PCs – so be sure to check this column out if you're an Apple user.

Web space
If you are interested in designing your own Web page, most Internet Service Providers will give you space to store it on. 2Mb should be enough for most people's requirements.

Set-up fee
Some ISPs charge a fee to open an account.

Monthly charge
If you don't go with a free ISP, then you'll pay a set amount per month to be online.

Phone support charges
Technical support is great – as long as you're not having to pay a fortune to benefit from it. Find out how much free service providers charge per minute for calls to their technical support desks.

Telephone support hours
The hours when the technical support desk will be open to take your calls.

Our ISP testing is carried out by NetBasics, an independent company specialising in providing ISP information for consumers and businesses. NetBasics makes every effort to ensure that the data presented to you is correct. The publishers of *the Net* and NetBasics cannot be held liable for any damages caused by the publication of this data. Any Internet service provider that wishes to be included in the evaluation programme should contact eval@netbasics.com **For more information on NetBasics, visit its Web site at *www.netbasics.com*.**

PHONE NUMBER	EMAIL ADDRESS	CONTENT	MAC SUPPORT	WEB SPACE	SET-UP FEE	MONTHLY CHARGE	PHONE SUPPORT CHARGES	PHONE SUPPORT HOURS
Sign up online	1	None	No	0	0	0	Unavailable	n/a
01473 211922	1	None	Yes	5Mb	None	11.75	Mobile	9-5 M-F, 8-9 M-S
0800 3765432	5	Massive amount of content	Yes	10Mb	0	9.99	Free	8-10.30M-F 9-9.30S-S
0700 2842867	1	'Flightalogue' lists a host of goodies	No	15Mb	0	11.75	Standard	9-9 7 days
0870 6006006	5	Entertainment, sport, shopping, finance etc	Yes	10Mb	0	0	50p per minute	24/7
01509 651451	5	None	No	10Mb	0	0	£1 per minute	9-9 M-F, 10-8 Sat
Sign up online	0	None	No	0	0	0	n/a	n/a
0800 800001	5	None	Yes	10Mb	0	11.75	Local	24/7
0800 0923001	5	Channels and online account administration	No	20Mb	0	0	National	24/7
0171 3358300	5	Chat servers, channels, services, web news	Yes	20Mb	0	0	Free	24/7
0845 3555050	Unlimited	None	Yes	30Mb	0	6.25+	Local call	9-10 M-F, 12-6 Sa-Su
0800 3582828	Unlimited	None	Yes	25Mb	0	8.99	Free	24/7
Sign up online	Unlimited	Channel based content provided by Virgin	No	Unlimited	0	0	Unavailable	24/7
0990 000200	5	A large range of channels and a search engine	No	10Mb	0	17.95	National	8-12 Midnight
0845 3063636	5	Online dating, Bunshopping, The Sun online etc	Yes	25Mb	0	0	50p per minute	24/7
01543 454840	1	None	Yes	0.1Mb	0	11.74	Standard	8.30-6.00 M-F
Sign up online	Unlimited	None	No	Unlimited	0	0	Metered	24/7
0181 3711234	Unlimited	None	Yes	20Mb	0	11.75	Local	24/7
0800 0720000	Unlimited	User zone containing handy member services	Yes	20Mb	0	13.5	Local	9-9 7days
0171 6814444	Unlimited	None	Yes	2Mb	0	11.99	Free	24/7
0906 3263366	Unlimited	Free access to the Mplayer games network	No	20Mb	0	0	50p per minute	24/7
01624 677666	Unlimited	None	Yes	5Mb	0	11.75	Local	9-10 M-F 10-4 Sa-Su
0800 0737800	Unlimited	None	Yes	15Mb	0	0	National	7-11, 7 Days First
0870 7409223	4	None	No	5Mb	0	7.73	Local	24/7
01303 775500	Unlimited	Multiplayer Games Server. Email fax system	Yes	10Mb	0	0	0845 access	8-12 Midnight
Sign up online	1	Newsgroups & IE5 download	No	10Mb	0	0	Metered	24/7
01329 511611	Unlimited	Games links and independent status	Yes	20Mb	0	0	National rates	9-6pm 7 days
0870 7060504	5	None	Yes	Unlimited	0	0	Premium Rate	24/7
0906 2517517	Unlimited	Extensive channel based content	Yes	15Mb	0	0	50p per minute	24/7

INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDERS

ISP NAME	WEB ADDRESS	DESCRIPTION	TYPE OF SERVICE
Free to You **FREE**	**www.free2you.co.uk**	No frills free ISP with online sign-up	Unlimited
Freeway **FREE**	**www.freewayuk.com**	Free access, free mail and Web space. Comprehensive service in a neat package	Unlimited
Freewire **FREE**	**www.freewire.net**	Free ISP without any signup requirements. Use any username and password	Unlimited
Freezone **FREE**	**www.freezone.co.uk**	A free ISP offering the usual package in a smart format	Unlimited
Gateway 2000 **FREE**	**www.ukgateway.net**	An ISP service from the hardware retailers of the same name. Packaged with Gateway computers	Unlimited
Go Free **FREE**	**www.gofree.co.uk**	Free ISP offering online signup, complete with helpline	Unlimited
IC24 **FREE**	**www.ic24.net**	The free ISP service of Mirror Group Newspapers	Unlimited
LineOne **FREE**	**www.lineone.net**	British Telecom's Internet service has recently dropped its subscription	Unlimited
London Web Comm Ltd	**www.londonweb.net**	An emphasis on corporate clientele	Unlimited
Netcom	**www.netcom.net.uk**	A comprehensive range of services to the home and business user	Unlimited
Paradise Internet Network Service	**www.pins.co.uk**	Paradise Internet are a subscription provider who also author software	Unlimited
Screaming.net **FREE**	**www.screaming.net**	The pioneer of the free access and free phonecall model	Unlimited
Sonnet Internet Ltd	**www.sonnet.co.uk**	Packages and solutions for the private and business user	Unlimited
This is it! **FREE**	**www.thisisit.co.uk**	End-user targeted free ISP	Unlimited
UK Fantastic **FREE**	**www.ukfantastic.net**	Spirited free ISP offering good online technical help	Unlimited
UK Online Ltd **FREE**	**www.ukonline.co.uk**	A family friendly free ISP with plenty of shareware & gaming software. Sign up online	Unlimited
UK People **FREE**	**www.ukpeople.net**	Free ISP, online chat, set-up and help	Unlimited
Virgin Net **FREE**	**www.virgin.net**	Long standing ISP now offering a stylish free Internet access service	Unlimited
Which? Online	**www.which.net**	A free ISP from the consumer affairs magazine of the same name	Unlimited
Wireplay Internet **FREE**	**www.wireplay.com**	Wireplay is an online games network offering access to Intranet based fast games servers	Unlimited
X-Stream Network **FREE**	**www.x-stream.com**	Offers enhanced member services such as occasional free phone calls to the Net	Unlimited

Network performance

September 1999

Independent testing carried out by NetBasics – contact eval@netbasics.com

We test the best ISPs in the country for the reliability and speed of their connection. The tests are conducted in three areas and a star rating is given indicative of their performance. The three areas of testing are:

VARIATION IN MODEM SPEED

This is a gauge to measure whether you will get a constant speed once a modem connects to your ISP. ISPs should offer a constant speed and we measure any variation. Each ISP starts with a potential 100 per-cent and loses position the greater the variance in connection. This is achieved by comparison so that no ISP is favoured.

VARIATION IN TIME TO CONNECT

This part of the test measures the variation in how long it takes to get connected to your ISP. The reading is taken from the stage between clicking 'Connect' and then physically connecting.

AVAILABILITY

There's nothing more frustrating than dialling up to your ISP and finding you can't actually get through and onto the Internet. This area measures how many times an ISP refuses to connect, either through engaged tones, or if it does not respond correctly to the signals from your modem.

The results are combined into a single reading giving us a fair way to chart ISPs based on all relevant aspects of their dial-in service.

The results are based on a sample of 50 ISPs from our ongoing tests.

1	Enterprise	★★★★★	
2	Direct Connection	★★★★★	
3	Easynet	★★★★★	
4	AOL	★★★★★	
5	CIX	★★★★★	
6	London Web	★★★★★	
7	This is IT	★★★★★	
8	Paradise Internet	★★★★★	
9	Sonnet Internet	★★★★★	
10	Cyberphile	★★★★★	
11	Firstnet Services	★★★★★	
12	Aviators Network	★★★★★	
13	Demon Internet	★★★★★	
14	Free2you	★★★★★	
15	Go Free	★★★★★	
16	Free-Internet	★★★★★	
17	Freenet	★★★★★	
18	AngliaNet	★★★★	
19	CallNet	★★★★	
20	Freeway UK	★★★★	
21	Compuserve	★★★★	
22	ClaraNet	★★★★	
23	Netcom	★★★★	
24	LineOne	★★★★	
25	CurrantBun	★★★★	
26	Wireplay	★★★★	
27	Freewire	★★★★	
28	Breathe	★★★★	
29	X-Stream	★★★★	
30	Which? Online	★★★	
31	UK Online	★★★	
32	BT Click	★★★	
33	Gateway 2000	★★★	
34	EidosNet	★★★	
35	F9 Free	★★	
36	Virgin Net	★★★	
37	Freeserve	★★★	
38	Cable and Wireless Internet Lite	★★★	
39	BT Internet	★★★	
40	Dabsol	★★★	
41	Screaming.net	★★★	
42	IC24	★★★	
43	Free-Online.net	★★★	
44	Connect Free	★★★	
45	FreeZone	★★★	
46	Aardvaak	★★★	
47	UK People	★★★	
48	First Web	★★	
49	Bigwig.net	★★	
50	UK Fantastic	★★	

what service provider?

PHONE NUMBER	EMAIL ADDRESSES	CONTENT	MAC SUPPORT	WEB SPACE	SET-UP FEE	MONTHLY CHARGE	PHONE SUPPORT CHARGES	PHONE SUPPORT HOURS
Sign up online	Unlimited	Search engine page and technical support	No	10Mb	0	0	Available soon	n/a
0906 6903319	Unlimited	Includes news, sport, weather, shopping	No	20Mb	0	0	50p per minute	24/7
0906 7160550	Unlimited	None	No	15Mb	0	0	50p per minute	24/7
0870 7441111	Unlimited	On site search engine access	No	20Mb	0	0	50p per minute	24/7
At Gateway Stores	Unlimited	None	No	10Mb	0	0	Free	24/7
Sign up online	Unlimited	None	No	20Mb	0	0	Metered	24/7
0870 9090262	Unlimited	Channel based content with news, sport, weather.	No	10Mb	0	0	50p per minute	24/7
0800 111210	5	News, shopping, sport, community etc	Yes	10Mb	0	0	50p per minute	8-Midnight M-Sa
0181 3494500	3	None	Yes	5Mb	17.63	14.68	Standard	9-9 M-Sa
0870 5668008	20	A business oriented portal site	Yes	25Mb	0	14.95	National	24/7
01256 414863	1	None	Yes	2	17.63	9.4	National	11-7 M-F
At Tempo stores	Unlimited	Well organised content page	No	10Mb	0	0	50p per minute	24/7
0171 8912000	Unlimited	None	Yes	5Mb	0	12.50	National	9-9 M-S
0906 9124000	Unlimited	None	No	20Mb	0	0	£1 per minute	
Sign up online	Unlimited	None	Yes	5Mb	0	0	£1 per minute	24/7
01749 333333	1	None	Yes	Unlimited	0	0	50p per minute	24/7
Sign up online	Unlimited	An online community,, games and downloads	No	5Mb	0	0	50p per minute	24/7
0500 558800	5	Several Virgin channels	Yes	10Mb	0	0	50p per minute	24/7
0645 830240	1	Online shopping and consumer affairs content	Yes	2Mb	11.75	14.75	Free	24/7
0845 757 7577	0	Games news, games chat, games add-ons	No	0	0	0	50p per minute	12pm - 12 am, 7 days
0870 7306466	1	Chat, news, lifestyle, shopping, etc	No	20Mb	0	0	50p per minute	24/7

ISP NEWS IN BRIEF All the service provider news you need

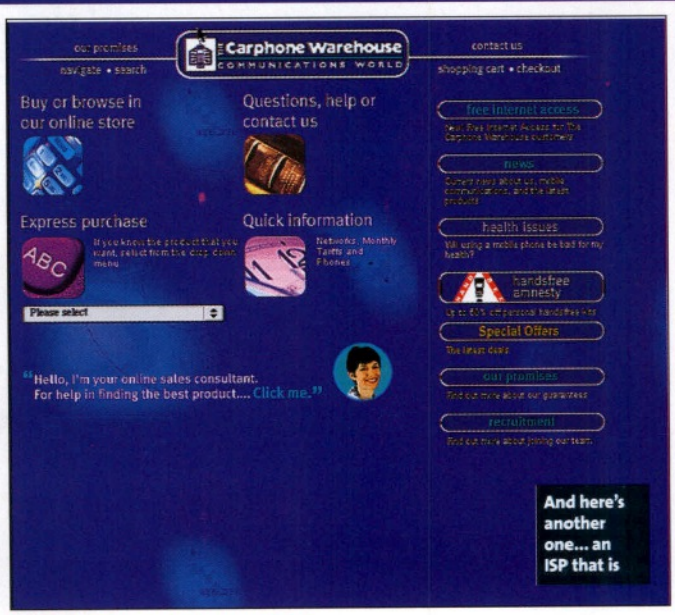
VIRGIN SPORTS NEW FEATURE

To coincide with the new football season, Virgin Net has introduced Sport Saturday to its online service. Users can now log on to hear live

Sporty ISP (above); Mac in a million and Uri's personal service (far right)

audio sports commentary, as well as news and reviews from a variety of top sporting events. Punters are also able to have a flutter at the same time, as the site runs in conjunction with online bookie Blue Square.

www.virgin.net



And here's another one... an ISP that is

NEW ISP ON THE LINE

The latest high street name to hit the ISP market is Carphone Warehouse. In a joint venture with the Excite UK portal and BT Click, it aims to recruit half a million subscribers in the next year. Users can subscribe at either www.carphonewarehouse.com, or by picking up a CD-ROM from any Carphone Warehouse store.

A MILLION MACS

American ISP FreeMac.com is planning to give away one million Apple iMacs over the next two years, to anyone who signs up to its service for three years. Users also get a Visa card with a number pre-loaded onto the iMac, allowing 'one-click' shopping. The offer is currently only available in the US but what they have over there often ends up over here. ***www.freemac.com***

POWER TO THE PEOPLE

New ISP Peoples Net is offering subscribers a choice of around 1000 domain names (the bit after the @ symbol) as their email address. The service was launched by the spoon-bender extraordinaire and Net aficionado Uri Geller, and five percent of all the company's revenue will go to charity.

'With this amazing choice of email addresses, people can now drive down the information high-way wearing personalised plates that reflect their image,' declares Mr Geller. If you say so, Uri.

www.peoplesnet.net

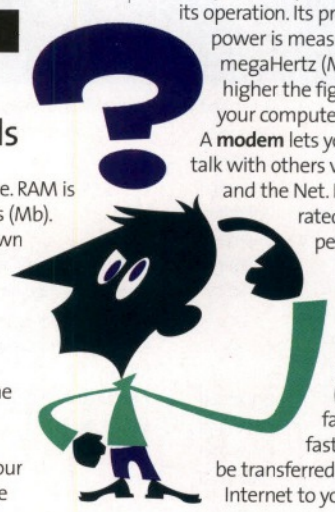
What kit?

Whether you're upgrading your system or starting out from scratch, we've got the ideal Net-ready set-up to suit your needs

Your current PC is straining under the weight of all this frenetic activity on the Net. And while you've got the money to upgrade, you don't know what to buy. Which is where *the net* comes to the rescue. On these pages, we've suggested outfits to suit depending on your budget and requirements.

The 'Family Starter' pack provides the bare bones of the basic family Internet set-up – perfect for keeping the kids happy, or staying in touch with friends from foreign climes. 'The Sky's The Limit' set-up is designed for lovers of gadgets, add-ons and status symbols, while 'On The Move' shows you how to take your Net connection anywhere.

Meanwhile, you'll need some of the more mysterious terms explained: **RAM** (random-access memory) is your computer's working memory, used for temporary data storage while programs are in use. The more RAM it has, the more things your computer can do at once. RAM is measured in megabytes (Mb). Your **hard disk**, also known as the hard drive, this is the long-term store for all of your computer's information and programs. The bigger your hard disk, the more info it can hold. Applications and every other file you have on your machine take up storage space – so the more of it you have available, the better. The capacity of your hard disk is measured in gigabytes (Gb). The **processor** or **CPU** (central processing unit) is what powers your computer and controls its operation. Its processing power is measured in megaHertz (MHz). The higher the figure, the faster your computer works.



A **modem** lets your computer talk with others via phone lines and the Net. Its speed is rated in kilobits per second (kbps). The higher the speed your modem can work at (56kbps is the fastest), the faster data can be transferred from the Internet to your computer.

THE FAMILY STARTER PACK

The complete family home computing solution giving you the freedom to work, play and get on the Net **Top budget £2100**

COMPUTER

Obviously you'll need a computer before you do anything else and this Gateway G7-450 is a sound candidate. With its 450MHz Pentium III processor, 128Mb of RAM and big 8.4Gb hard drive, the whole family would be able to use this machine.

Price £1408
Telephone 0800 973132

MODEM

A modem is the second essential ingredient for Net connection. You won't go far wrong with this Pace 56kbps model.

Price £79 approx.
Telephone 0990 561001

DIGITAL CAMERA

Delete poor pix as you go along, and transfer images on to your computer in seconds. This Kodak DC210+ will do nicely.

Price £349.99
Telephone 0800 281487

PRINTER

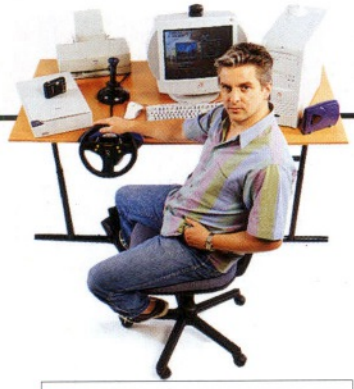
Whether you want to print content from Web sites or emails from family and friends, a printer is another indispensable add-on. The HP DeskJet 695c is far from expensive and will do an adequate job for most people.

Price £129 **Telephone** 0990 474747

SCANNER

If you're designing your own Web pages, you may want to put some pics from the family album online. Or perhaps you'd like to send photos of weddings or parties to relatives via email. A good budget A4 scanner, such as this Umax 1220U, need not break the bank.

Price £99
Telephone 01344 871329



...WHEN THE SKY'S THE LIMIT

Splash out on the ultimate Internet set-up – surf the Net, play games, jazz up your site and show off to your friends. **Top budget £3200**

WEBCAM

Post your Webcam on your site so the whole world can see what's going on in your office, or use it for videochat with friends and colleagues around the world. Just plug in this Creative Labs Webcam II USB and you're away.
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Telephone 0800 973194

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Price £199
Telephone 0800 220456

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Telephone 0171-586 1477

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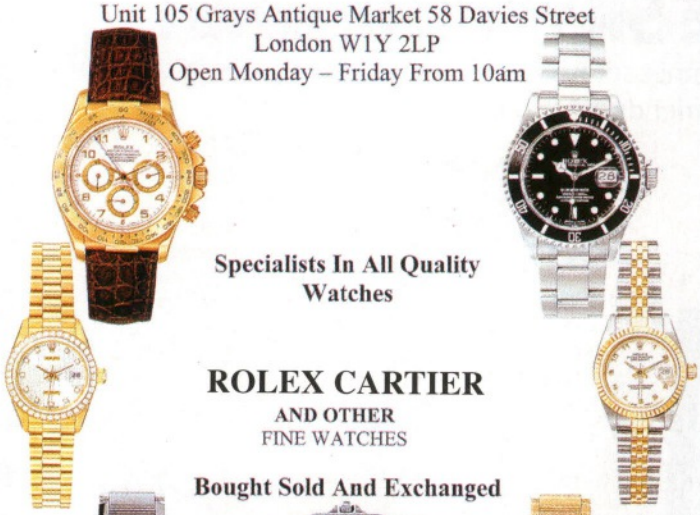

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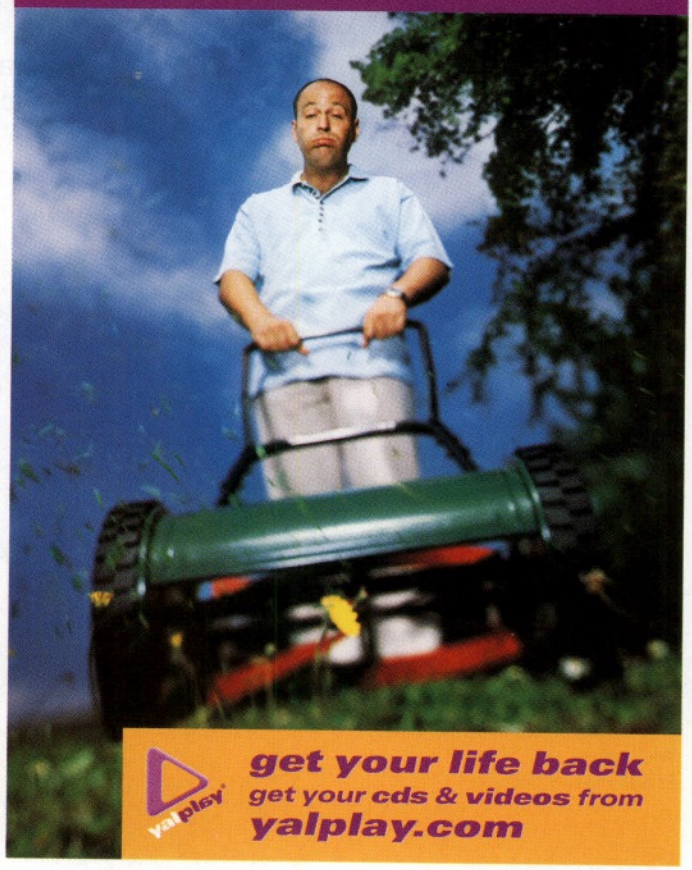

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Price £3006
Telephone 0990 424424

PDA

If a laptop's too large for your purposes, how about a PDA (personal digital assistant)? We'd go for a Palm V, weighing just 4oz.
Price £349.99
Telephone 0800 7311064

MOUSE

If you don't get on with your laptop's touchpad, you'll need a mouse – Logitech's Wheelmouse for Notebooks includes a wheel for scrolling without scroll bars.
Price £24.99
Telephone 01306 734300

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Price Phone £99.99; modem £130
Telephone 0990 237237

DIGITAL CAMERA

If you travel the world, the Fujifilm MX-2700 would be handy: it lets you take top-quality pictures and download them straight on to your laptop.
Price £599.99
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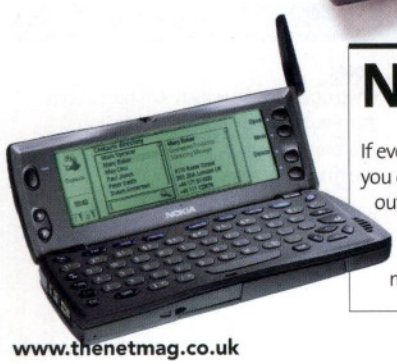


NOKIA 9110 Laptop PC, phone and Web surfing all for under £400

If even hand baggage is a burden you can't bear, you could always try out Nokia's new(ish) 9110 Communicator. Chunkier than the new generation of ultra-tiny mobile phones it may be, but the Nokia packs in a GSM phone, fax, Net access, email, notepad, and calendar – and still fits in your pocket. Of course, there has to be a catch, and it comes in the spec of the modem, which at just 14.4kbps is the slowest of the slow.
Price £349 with connection
Telephone 01480 434343

Web browsers

What do all those little buttons do? What are the typical component parts of a Web site? Familiarise yourself with the tools of your trade

What is the World Wide Web?

The Web – for short – is a 'service' that runs on the Internet. In other words, it uses the basic infrastructure of the Internet – all those millions of computers connected together – to work. Essentially, a Web site is a collection of linked pages displaying text, graphics, and even sound. These pages form a site that can link to other sites on the Net, building up a 'web' of sites across the world. Hence the name World Wide Web.

What can I do on the Web?

The Internet is no longer the preserve of anorak-clad geeks. Over 10,000 people in the UK alone are joining the Net every day. Here are just a few reasons why:

- **PHONE BANKING** – pay your bills, check your balance or make a complaint via your computer
- **RESEARCH HOMEWORK** – find out lots of facts about the subject of the essay you have to write by tomorrow morning
- Find **CHEAP FLIGHTS** and holidays
- Find **INFORMATION** on subjects of interest – from gardening to gold mining, architecture to aromatherapy, companies to cats
- **DOWNLOAD** the entire text of classic books – or, if you have the time and the money for your phone bill, read them online

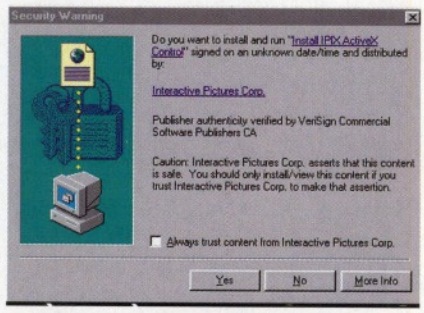
What do I use to explore the Web?

The software you use to look at pages on the Web is called a 'browser'. The most popular are Microsoft Internet Explorer and Netscape Navigator. If you have a PC running Windows 95 or 98, you will almost certainly have Internet Explorer already installed, so that's what we refer to in these pages. However, Navigator and other browsers such as Opera run in much the same way. See the browser comparison table below for details.

Installing plug-ins

Your basic Internet Explorer set-up comes with several 'plug-ins'. These are additional pieces of software which enable your browser to play, for example, multimedia effects contained in some Web sites. If you arrive at a site requiring a plug-in that you don't have, you'll be prompted to download and install it.

The essential plug-ins you'll need to get the most from your browsing include: RealPlayer, which lets you watch videos or listen to music Shockwave, for animation and sound; and QuickTime, which plays video and sound.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Publisher authenticity verified by VeriSign Commercial Software Publishers CA
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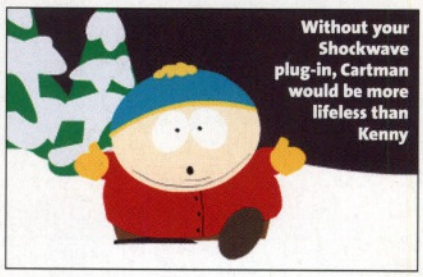
Yes
No
More Info



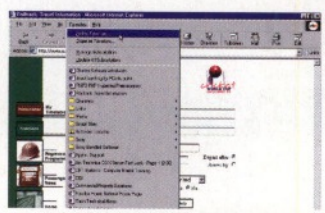
Installing a plug-in

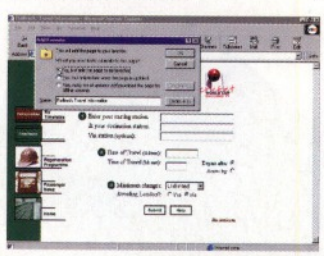
1 When you visit a site requiring a plug-in, a prompt appears. Click 'Get Plug-in' and you'll be taken to the plug-in's home page.
2 Click on the link where you can 'Get' or 'Download' the plug-in.
3 Explorer will automatically put the plug-in inside the correct folder on your PC.
4 Go back to the Web site by pressing the Back button on the Explorer toolbar and enjoy it in its full glory.

Saving sites in Internet Explorer

Typing in the name of a Web site every time you want to visit it can be a pain – especially if it's a long and complex name. Fortunately, all Web browsers have a way of saving the locations of sites you like, so you can revisit them without needing to retype them. In Internet Explorer these saved site addresses are called Favourites, while Netscape Navigator calls them Bookmarks.

1 From the Favourites menu, choose 'Add to Favourite.' The keyboard shortcut for the move is Control D.
2 When asked whether you want to subscribe to the site, choose the 'No, just add this page to my Favourites' option. You'll see the title of the page in the 'Name' section of the site; if this is not descriptive enough for you, type a five or six word description of the site. Then hit OK.
3 You will now find that the site has been added to your Favourites menu. To visit the site, just click 'Favourites' and then go to the menu list and select it.





INTERMEDIATE TIP

If you have a favourite site, set your browser to automatically go straight there when you go online. To do this, go to the Edit menu in Internet Explorer, and choose Internet Options. Under the General tab, in the Home Page area, click Use Current if you are currently viewing the page you want to start with. Select Use Blank if you want to start with a blank page, or type in the address of the site in the space provided. To revert to using the standard screen click Use Default.

ADVANCED TIP

Organising the Favourites menu

If you want a particular Favourite site to appear at the top of the menu (thus saving scrolling through a list of dozens), it's easy. Click on the Favourites menu, select the item you want to move and hold the mouse down, rather than releasing it. Then drag upwards or downwards – a thick black line will show you where the Favourite will be placed on the menu when you release the mouse button. As you add more Favourites, the menu will grow. You might want to organise your Favourite sites into sub folders. We show you how to do this on our Web site help guide at ***www.thenetmag.co.uk/helpbutton***

Browser alternatives Internet Explorer 4 is not the only browser available; here are some of the alternatives you could try

BROWSER	COST	FROM	PROS	CONS
INTERNET EXPLORER 5	Free	***www.microsoft.com/ie***	Faster and more stable than Explorer 4, adds new features – radio, for example	6Mb download – which will take about 75 minutes on a normal connection
NETSCAPE NAVIGATOR 4.08	Free	***www.netscape.com***	Plenty of features, reasonably fast	Explorer is slowly but surely taking over the market, so more sites work best in IE
OPERA *free 30-day trial version available	$35*	***www.opera.com***	Small, blisteringly fast, lots of features	It costs money – the others are free

Your browser – what all those buttons mean

Understanding the toolbar

BACK Clicking this button takes you back to the last page. Click it once and you'll go back one page, or hold to see the last 10

STOP If you decide that you don't want to view a page while it's loading, just hit Stop

FAVOURITES Pop-up window containing a list of your Favourite sites – or you can view them from the menu

HOME This button takes you to the page you viewed when you started your browser

MAIL Opens your email program

PRINT Prints the page

GO When you've entered an address, hit Enter or click here to go to the site

LINKS A quick shortcut to some of your favourite sites, which you can add to

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help
Back Forward Stop Refresh Home Search Favorites History Mail Print Edit Related
Address www.thenetmag.co.uk
Go Links

FORWARD If you've used the Back button to move back a page or two, the Forward button should take you back again

REFRESH This makes the browser redraw the page on the screen – useful if you have stopped a page from loading

SEARCH This button opens Internet Explorer's search options where you'll find short-cuts to finding what you want on the Internet

HISTORY Clicking this button produces a list of all the sites visited over the past few days or weeks – so if you found a really useful page two days ago but forgot to add it to your Favourites list, you can easily find it again by looking here

EDIT If you have a Web page editor, you can edit a Web page by clicking here

RELATED SITES Launches the Explorer 'Alexa' plug-in which provides extra search options

Viewing your browser

1 TITLE BAR
Tells you the name of the site you're visiting and the program you're currently using

2 MENU BAR
The range of options you can use while navigating the Internet, including your Favourites menu

3 IE LOGO
Contains a link to the MSN home page, in case you're completely lost

4 ADDRESS
The address of the site you're opening, including the http:// prefix

5 GO BUTTON
IE5 feature: click to go to the address you've typed in (or hit the Return key)

6 LINKS BUTTON
IE5 feature: shortcut to the 'Links' option within your Favourites folder

7 WEB SITE WINDOW
The whole page you're opening, including ads and links to other sites

8 BANNER ADVERTISEMENT
Click here to visit the service advertised in this small banner

9 INDEX
What you'll find on the site. Click on an option to enter it

10 TEXT LINKS
Move your cursor to the underlined text and you'll be able to open the relevant link just by clicking on it

11 EMAIL FEEDBACK
Most Web sites allow you to send them questions and enquiries.

12 DOWNLOAD DATA
This space tells you what Explorer is doing – or which site it could open when your cursor passes over a link

JARGON BUSTERS

DOWNLOAD Retrieve a page or file from across the Internet
HOME PAGE The initial page of a site you see when you connect
HTTP Short for HyperText **TRANSFER PROTOCOL** The way your browser pulls in Web pages
WEB PAGE Web sites are divided up into 'pages'. Each page contains a link to another page, building up a 'web'
URL Short for Uniform Resource Locator. A technical term for a Web address
WWW Short for World Wide Web – found in addresses

The battle of the browsers

Netscape and Microsoft may dominate the browser market, but there are alternatives. We take a look at the best of the rest

Everything you could want from a browser

Apple and Microsoft; Coke and Pepsi; Adidas and Nike. It's extremely easy to forget that there are alternatives to the big brand names. The same goes for browsers. The chances are you use Internet Explorer as your gateway to the Web – statistically, it's the most popular browser on the planet. If you don't use IE, then you'll almost certainly use Netscape Navigator. Together they account for over 97 percent of all Web page hits.

With the facilities that the two offer, it's hardly surprising that they rule the roost. Internet Explorer 5.0 is the current leader of the Internet pack. It's packed – jam-packed in fact – with features. It does everything that IE 4 did, but includes some additional features such as auto-filling of form fields, as well as the ability to add little bits to the browser such as a search engine that automatically looks up Web sites related to the one you're looking at. IE 5 is pretty much everything you could possibly want in a browser – provided you want everything in a browser, that is.

Netscape come back with Sea Monkey

Netscape Navigator 4.08 represents the only serious competition to Internet Explorer. But it still can't reach the dizzying heights of IE – in fact it's slipped so much in popularity that Web site designers now often make sure their pages look right in IE alone.

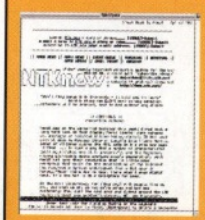
Netscape 4.0 was the first so-called 'modern' browser, and, like most things ever referred to as modern, is beginning to show its age. It's not as shiny or user-friendly as IE, and a fair bit slower. But Netscape have something up their sleeves to tackle the competition: Sea Monkey, the codename for Netscape 5.0.

You would've thought that with the market pretty much sewn up between the big two, no-one would be foolhardy enough to attempt to

Best of the browser alternatives

Surf Monkey *www.surfmonkey.com*

- Liven up your browser experience with interactive cartoons and sound files
- 'Blow up' Web sites you don't like or, cover them with paint
- Block unsavoury content with SurfWatch



MacLynx *www.lirmm.fr/~gutkneco/maclynx*

- Text-only browser
- Ideal for looking at text heavy sites

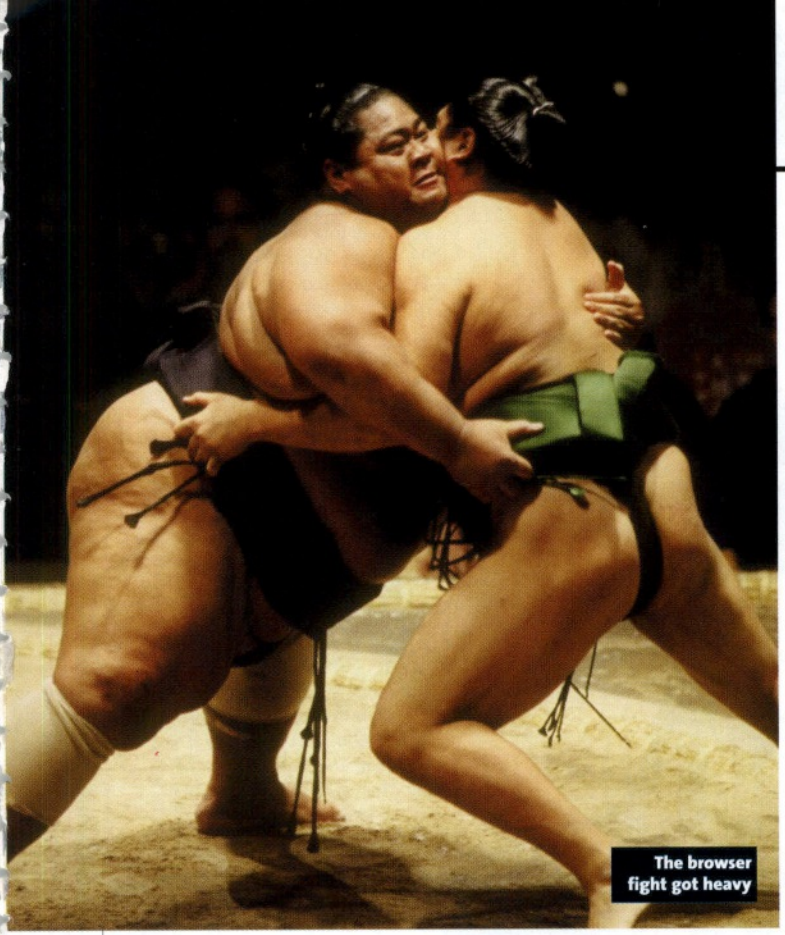
iCab *www.icab.de*

- Small download and very fast
- Has the ability to block banner ads

Opera *www.opera.com*

- Extremely fast and small in size
- Let down by ugly and unwieldy design

BROWSER	FOR	AGAINST	SPEED
MAC BROWSERS			
iCAB	Extremely fast. Gets rid of irritations like ad banners	Doesn't support full range of features found in IE or Netscape	Fast
HotJava 3.0	Pretty showcase for Java technology	Slow. Somewhat unstable	Slow
Internet Explorer 4.5	State-of-the-art browsing on the Mac. Does, well, everything	Can be memory-hungry and occasionally needs re-installing	Fast
Lynx	The original text-only browser. Blazingly fast at finding the facts	If it isn't text, Lynx isn't interested	Ultra fast
Netscape Navigator 4.08	It's almost as good as IE...	Doesn't display pages quite as prettily as IE, and can be slow	Medium
PC BROWSERS			
Amaya	Great for people on Internet standards committees...	... and no-one else.	Slow
Arachne	It runs in DOS. It's very small. It's written by Czechs	It was a pain to set up, and looked like an old Amiga app	Fast
Custom Browser	Adds minimal extra customisation facilities to IE	It's just IE with an ad in the top panel	Fast
HotJava 3.0	Pretty showcase for Java technology...	Slow, though not as bad as on the Mac	Slow
Internet Explorer 5.0	For the moment, the king of all browsers	Hard to fault, unless you really try	Fast
Lynx	The original text-only browser	If it isn't text, Lynx isn't interested	Ultra fast
Mosaic	The world's first graphical browser. Good for developers	Feels old. Is old. Hasn't been updated since 1996	Medium
NeoPlanet	Funky interface replacement for Internet Explorer	It's just Internet Explorer in new clothes	Fast
Netscape Navigator 4.08	Has a wide range of features for the hardcore user.	Doesn't display pages quite as prettily as IE	Medium/fast
Opera	Faster than either IE or Netscape	Looks absolutely horrible	Fast
Surf Monkey	Lots and lots of fun – blowing up sites is great	Looks like it's designed for smaller screens	Medium


The browser fight got heavy

write a rival browser. But there are others. Alternative browsers can be useful in certain situations; for example, if you have lousy computer specifications, or want to give the kids something to play with. They can even represent an expression and extension of your individuality.

Possibly the best-known alternative browser is Opera, a Norwegian effort that was designed from the outset to do everything the big boys did, only cleaner and faster. Opera is a tiny little number at around 1.5Mb (compared with Netscape Communicator's 10Mb+). It's fast; loading and displaying pages quicker than IE4 or Netscape (although Microsoft fixed a lot of the performance problems in IE5), but it's let down by an ugly, screen-filling look, which is heavy on redundant folders and puts buttons in some bizarre places.

iCab can speed up the Web for Mac users

The Opera equivalent for Macs (although Opera Software is forever saying they're going to create a Mac version) is iCab. It has many of the excellent features of Opera – it's small and fast – but it looks and works even better. Among iCab's more useful features is the ability to block banner ads, which often slow the loading of pages, and keep different security settings for different sites.

Laughing in the face of slow downloads

But as fast as they are, both iCab and Opera still cling to the rules. If you want a real rebel browser, try Lynx. This laughs loudly in the face of Web slowdown – it's text only, so it cuts download times dramatically. It's great if you want to look at information-heavy pages, like news sites. If you're looking for Shockwave -driven fun, though, this won't be the one for you.

Of course, if you want to create a browser these days, you don't actually have to go about the tedious task of writing one. Microsoft lets other companies use Internet Explorer as the basis of new browsers, so there's a whole bunch of alternative browsers out there that are in fact just IE in drag.

You can blow up Web sites you don't like or cover them in green paint

Cosmetic surgery for Internet Explorer

Take, for example, NeoPlanet. NeoPlanet is a program that plugs into Internet Explorer to give you more options and a choice of funky looks. But that's it. It isn't faster than IE, because it is IE. It looks cute, though, and the Austin Powers/Doctor Evil skins are a hoot. On the other hand, it is possible to end up going completely the wrong way: the imaginatively titled Custom Browser is just IE with a less interesting interface. Perhaps the best way to use IE like this is to build a child-specific browser round it. Either you can create a browser that doesn't let you look at any Web sites except for those from a vetted list, like Junior. Or you can go the whole hog and build a cartoon world around the browser, as our star browser of this group test does. A big hand please... for Surf Monkey.

Making a monkey out of the competition

Surf Monkey puts an animated interactive cartoon of a spaceship on top of IE. You get groovy sounds when you load a URL, and a friendly chimp informs you of exactly what's going on in a synthesised voice. Best of all, you can blow up Web sites you don't like, or gloop green paint all over them. Heaps of fun for kids and adults alike. It also blocks dodgy sites with SurfWatch.

So Surf Monkey is the winner, as it rescued us from browser despair by proving that there are still new ideas and real pleasure to be had in browser design. As for the rest: cast your eyes to the table above...

	WHY YOU'D WANT IT	PRICE	RATING	DOWNLOAD FROM
	Hate advertising. Want to boost the German economy	$29 for Pro version, otherwise free	★★★★	www.icab.de
	Java enthusiast	Free	★★	java.sun.com/products/hotjava/3.0/
	You want a cool browsing experience and have memory	Free	★★★★	www.microsoft.com/Mac/IE/
	For difficult research without pictures	Free	★★★★	www.lirmm.fr/~gutkneco/maclynx/download.html
	You want a decent multimedia browsing experience	Free	★★★	www.netscape.com/computing/download/index.html
	You have a soft spot for someone called Amaya	Free	★★	www.w3.org/Amaya/User/BinDist.html
	You like DOS. You like Amigas. You have no friends	Free	★★	arachne.cz
	You're confused	Free	★	www.custombrowser.com
	You're a Java enthusiast	Free	★★	java.sun.com/products/hotjava/3.0/
	One for everyone	Free	★★★★★	www.microsoft.com/windows/ie/default.htm
	For difficult research without pictures	Free	★★★★	lynx.browser.org
	You're a stickler for tradition	Free	★★★	www.ncsa.uiuc.edu/SDG/Software/mosaic-w/
	Austin Powers is your favourite movie	Free	★★★★	www.neoplanet.com
	You're hopelessly sentimental	Free	★★★★	www.netscape.com/computing/download/index.html
	You're still pining for Windows 3.11	$30	★★★★	www.opera.com
	You're under 12	Free	★★★★★	www.surfmonkey.com

Email

Yet to send that first email? Don't be embarrassed, just follow our easy guide

What is email?

Email is a way of sending messages around the Internet. While early programs could only handle plain text, most can now carry pictures, and even video clips and sound.

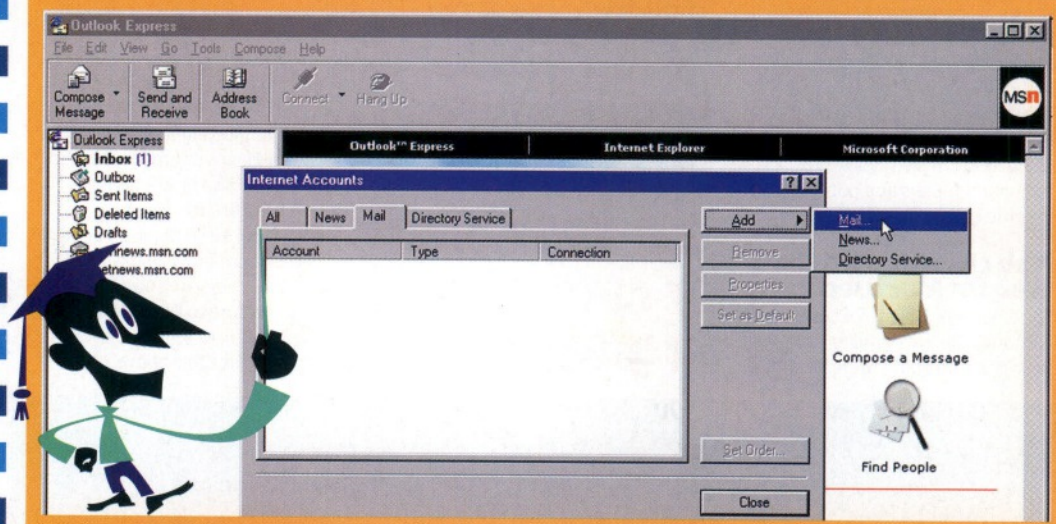
So why should I use it?

➤ It's a lot cheaper to email a friend than to phone them long distance.
➤ It's delivered almost instantly – there's no seven-day wait if you're emailing someone on the other side of the globe.
➤ You can keep in touch with family and friends, even while they're away on business or holidays – they can visit a cybercafé and check their mail from there.
➤ Many companies rely on email because it's much faster and cheaper than ordinary or 'snail mail'.
➤ You can have information on your favourite subjects – whether it's fishing, the stock market, or a TV programme – delivered to your mailbox every day.

Okay, so how do I use it?

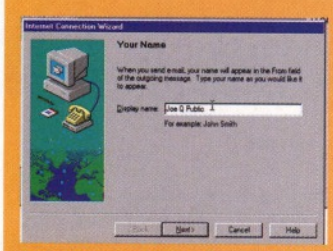
There are lots of email packages, but the one most widely used is Microsoft's Outlook Express. If you've bought a PC in the last two or three years, or you've downloaded Microsoft Internet Explorer for either Macintosh or PC, you'll already have Outlook Express installed. Our step-by-step guide shows you how to configure the program, create an email message, send it, and then read through the mail you've been sent.

1 Getting started with Outlook Express

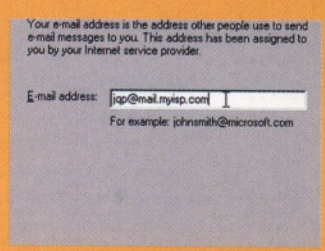


1 From the Start menu on your desktop, click Programs and then Outlook Express. If you are asked where you want it to store messages, select the pre-set or 'default' folder. The folder is kept in the Program Files folder on your hard drive.

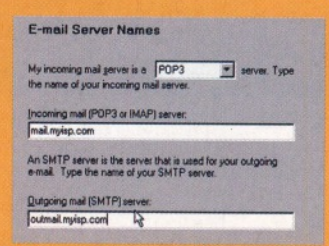
2 Once Outlook Express has loaded go to the Accounts box from the Tools menu, and click the Mail tab shown in the picture on the left. This will show you any mail accounts you already have set up, and allows you to create a new one. For the purposes of this exercise we are going to create a new email account. Next, click Add, and select Mail.



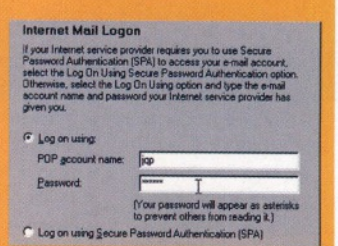
3 The Internet Connection Wizard will now guide you through the steps you need to take. First, enter your full name.


Your e-mail address is the address other people use to send e-mail messages to you. This address has been assigned to you by your Internet service provider.
E-mail address:
jqp@mail.myisp.com
For example: johnsmith@microsoft.com

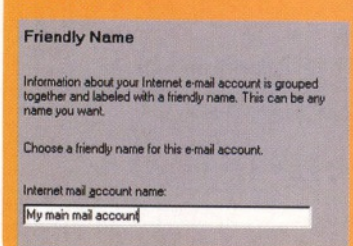
4 Type in your email address. This will have been given to you by your Internet service provider or ISP.


E-mail Server Names
My incoming mail server is a
POP3
server. Type the name of your incoming mail server.
Incoming mail (POP3 or IMAP) server:
mail.myisp.com
An SMTP server is the server that is used for your outgoing e-mail. Type the name of your SMTP server.
Outgoing mail (SMTP) server:
outmail.myisp.com

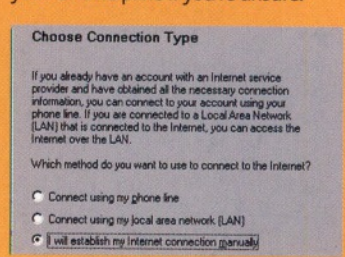
5 Enter the names of the email POP3/IMAP server in order to get incoming and outgoing mail. Call your ISP's helpline if you're unsure.


Internet Mail Logon
If your Internet service provider requires you to use Secure Password Authentication (SPA) to access your e-mail account, select the Log On Using Secure Password Authentication option. Otherwise, select the Log On Using option and type the e-mail account name and password your Internet service provider has given you.
Log on using:
POP account name:
jqp
Password:
(Your password will appear as asterisks to prevent others from reading it.)
Log on using Secure Password Authentication (SPA)

6 Type in your email address – just the part before the '@' sign – and your password. Again, your ISP should have given you these details.


Friendly Name
Information about your Internet e-mail account is grouped together and labeled with a friendly name. This can be any name you want.
Choose a friendly name for this e-mail account.
Internet mail account name:
My main mail account

7 Outlook Express asks for a 'friendly name' to give to your email account. We've called ours 'My main email account' for simplicity.

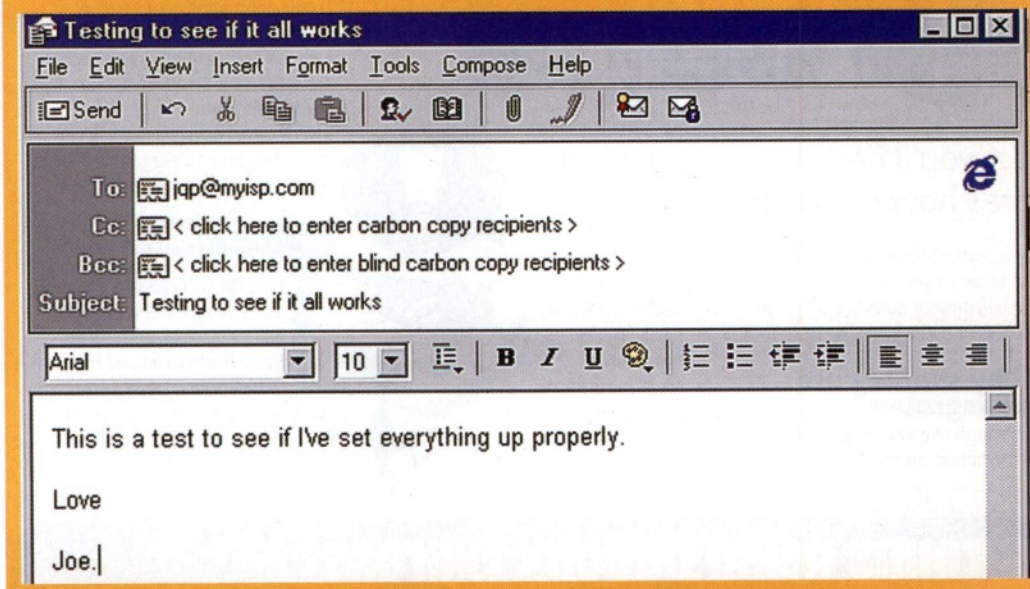

Choose Connection Type
If you already have an account with an Internet service provider and have obtained all the necessary connection information, you can connect to your account using your phone line. If you are connected to a Local Area Network (LAN) that is connected to the Internet, you can access the Internet over the LAN.
Which method do you want to use to connect to the Internet?
Connect using my phone line
Connect using my local area network (LAN)
I will establish my Internet connection manually

8 Outlook Express can automatically dial into your ISP for you, but it's probably best to connect manually. You can use Outlook offline, writing and managing your mail and then connect in order to send and receive messages. Choose the 'I will establish my Internet connection manually' option.

MORE EMAIL HELP AND ADVICE @ www.thenetmag.co.uk/helpbutton/

- ★ Creating an email address book
- ★ Email etiquette
- ★ Filtering your email messages
- ★ Sending pictures and files via email

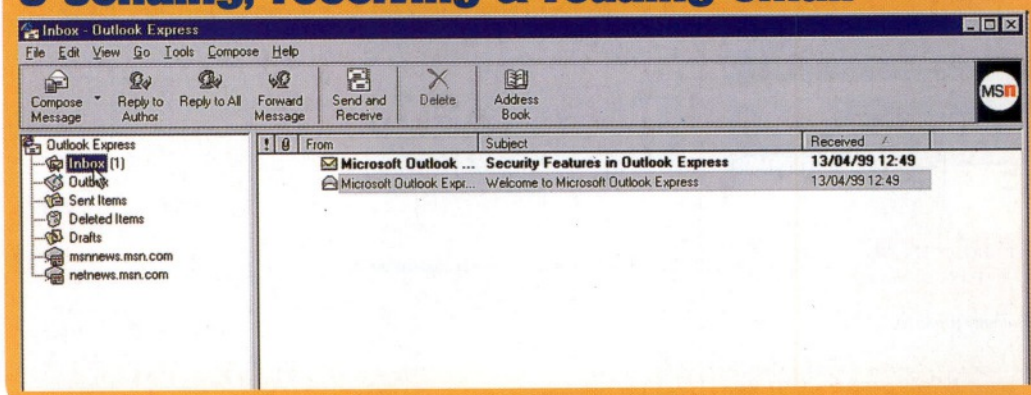
2 Composing your first email message



COMPOSING A MESSAGE

To create a message, click 'Compose Message'. If you click the small arrow just to the right, you will see that there are several pre-defined graphic message templates. But for now, just click on the button itself. Type your own email address in the 'To' field – you'll send an email to yourself to check that everything is working correctly. Enter a subject, for example 'Test Message', and in the body area just type a short message. From the File menu you can click Send to send your message now if you're online. Alternatively, if you're working offline click Send Later. This allows you to create more messages, and have them ready for sending when you're ready to log on to the Net.

3 Sending, receiving & reading email



SENDING & RECEIVING MAIL

To send and receive mail, connect to the Net, then click the Send and Receive button. This will check for mail and download any new messages, at the same time sending any outgoing messages you have created. Once the program has stopped receiving mail, you can disconnect from the Net if you wish, to save phone costs. Click on In Box to the left of the screen to access messages that you have received. Click on the message to read its contents.

EMAIL OPTIONS If you don't want to use Outlook Express, try these alternatives for size

EUDORA LIGHT

www.eudora.com

A very popular, free email package. Includes lots of great features. Doesn't support reading newsgroups, but copes happily with 'rich content email' – mail that includes sound, images and so on.

✔ **Lots of features**

✘ **None**

HOTMAIL

www.hotmail.com

A Web-based email program. Gives you a free email address, and can be accessed from any computer with a Web browser. Can also check email from a non-Web-based account.

✔ **Accessed from any computer**

✘ **You need to be online to read or compose mail**

EUDORA PRO 4.0

www.eudora.com

Commercial bigger brother to Eudora Light. Has all the features of Lite, but also allows you to check your mail from several different accounts easily.

✔ **Supports multiple mailboxes, spellchecker, email filtering**

✘ **It'll set you back nearly £30**

OUTLOOK 98

www.microsoft.com Commercial bigger brother to Outlook Express. Includes an address book, to-do list and calendar, all of which link very elegantly in to the email section of the program.

✔ **Integrates well with address book, diary and scheduler**

✘ **It'll set you back around £125**

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MORE EMAIL HELP AND ADVICE @ www.thenetmag.co.uk/helpbutton/

- ★ Sending your first message
- ★ Newsgroup etiquette
- ★ Members-only bulletin boards
- ★ Web forums

Newsgroups

Whatever your pet subject, you'll find others on the Net ready to talk about it. Here's how to link up with them

What is a newsgroup?

Newsgroups are one of the older services on the Internet. Each group is like a bulletin board – anyone can post messages to different newsgroups, and anyone can read the postings. There are tens of thousands of different newsgroup subjects available, so there will be one that matches your interests – whether you're looking for info on beekeeping or book-keeping, computers or comics, sewing or sailing.

Why should I use newsgroups?

Although the Web has plenty of information on most subjects, newsgroups will often have more detailed answers to questions. If you have a specific question on a subject, you can have half a dozen responses in two hours.

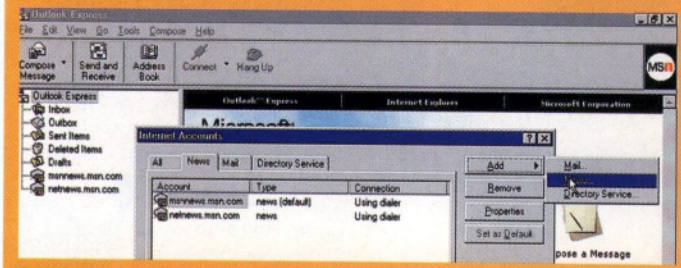
BEGINNER'S TIP

If you don't want to go to the bother of configuring Outlook Express or other newsgroup access software, visit DejaNews **www.deja.com** – a Web-based interface to newsgroups. You can read and send messages from here, all via your Web browser. Simple.

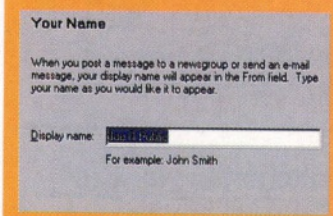
ADVANCED TIP

Your ISP will provide you with its own news server access. Mick's Place at **web.ukonline.co.uk/mick.sz/** has over 50 free access news server addresses. To add more servers to Outlook Express, go through the setting up steps outlined below.

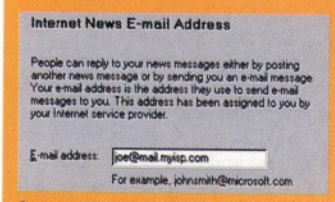
Accessing newsgroups using Outlook Express



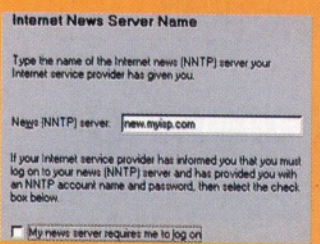
1 Go to the Accounts entry in the Tools menu, click on the News tab to list your current news accounts (if any), hit Add and choose News.


Your Name
When you post a message to a newsgroup or send an e-mail message, your display name will appear in the From field. Type your name as you would like it to appear.
Display name:
For example: John Smith

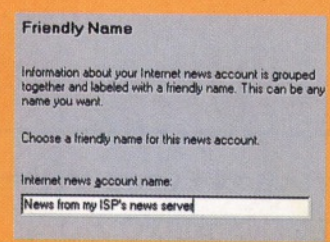
2 Type in your name. This will be displayed in any message you post to a newsgroup. Then hit Next.


Internet News E-mail Address
People can reply to your news messages either by posting another news message or by sending you an e-mail message. Your e-mail address is the address they use to send e-mail messages to you. This address has been assigned to you by your Internet service provider.
E-mail address:
joe@mail.myisp.com
For example: johnsmith@microsoft.com

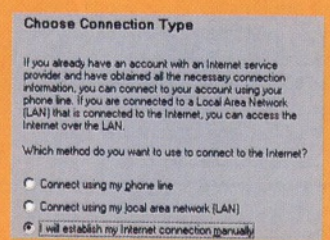
3 Type in your email address. This will be displayed in any message you post. Then click Next.


Internet News Server Name
Type the name of the Internet news (NNTP) server your Internet service provider has given you.
News (NNTP) server:
news.myisp.com
If your Internet service provider has informed you that you must log on to your news (NNTP) server and has provided you with an NNTP account name and password, then select the check box below.
My news server requires me to log on

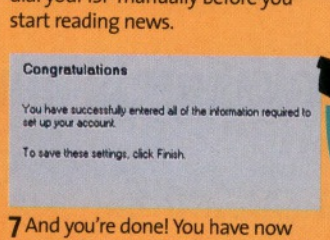
4 Enter the name of your ISP's server which should be given in your user documentation.


Friendly Name
Information about your Internet news account is grouped together and labeled with a friendly name. This can be any name you want.
Choose a friendly name for this news account.
Internet news account name:
News from my ISP's news server

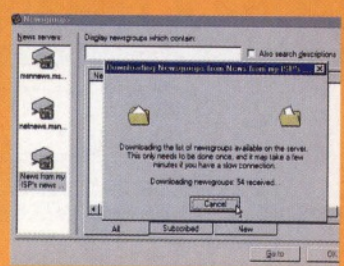
5 Give the news server a name that makes sense to you.


Choose Connection Type
If you already have an account with an Internet service provider and have obtained all the necessary connection information, you can connect to your account using your phone line. If you are connected to a Local Area Network (LAN) that is connected to the Internet, you can access the Internet over the LAN.
Which method do you want to use to connect to the Internet?
Connect using my phone line
Connect using my local area network (LAN)
I will establish my Internet connection manually

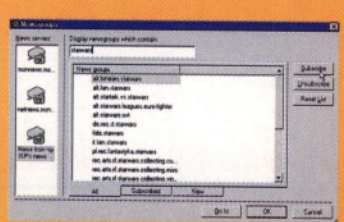
6 Tell Outlook Express that you will dial your ISP manually before you start reading news.


Congratulations
You have successfully entered all of the information required to set up your account.
To save these settings, click Finish.

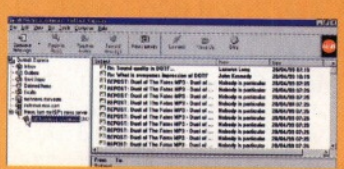
7 And you're done! You have now set up a newsgroup access account. Now let's see how to use it.



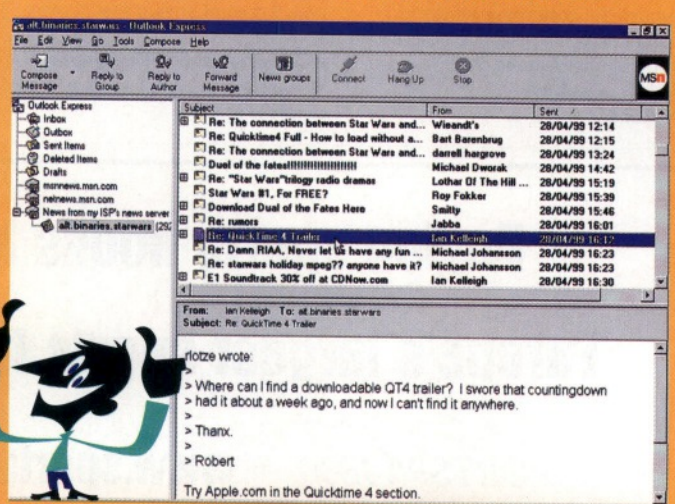
8 After hitting Close, you're asked if you want to download your ISP's list of newsgroups. When you click Yes, the list will be downloaded – so make sure you're online. This can take up to 10 minutes when you first connect to your news server because you are downloading the names of thousands of newsgroups.



9 Once all the newsgroups are downloaded, you can explore. If you want to find *Star Wars* postings, for example, type 'starwars' into the text field at the top of the window to display all newsgroups containing that word. You can subscribe to as many groups as you want.



10 To access a message inside a newsgroup, click on the subject header to read a summary. Double click the header and the whole message downloads, appearing on the lower half of the screen.


Outlook Express
Inbox
Outbox
Sent Items
Deleted Items
Drafts
msnnews.msn.com
netnews.msn.com
News from my ISP's news server
alt.binaries.starwars
Subject
From
Sent
Re: The connection between Star Wars and... Wieandt's 28/04/99 12:14
Re: Quicktime4 Full - How to load without a... Bart Barenbrug 28/04/99 12:15
Re: The connection between Star Wars and... darrell hargrove 28/04/99 13:24
Duel of the fates!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Michael Dworak 28/04/99 14:42
Re: "Star Wars"trilogy radio dramas Lothar Of The Hill ... 28/04/99 15:19
Star Wars 81, For FREE? Roy Fokker 28/04/99 15:39
Download Dual of the Fates Here Smitty 28/04/99 15:46
Re: rumors Jabba 28/04/99 16:01
Re: QuickTime 4 Trailer Ian Kelleigh 28/04/99 16:12
Re: Damn RIAA, Never let us have any fun ... Michael Johansson 28/04/99 16:23
Re: starwars holiday mpeg?? anyone have it? Michael Johansson 28/04/99 16:23
E1 Soundtrack 30% off at CDNow.com Ian Kelleigh 28/04/99 16:30
From: Ian Kelleigh To: alt.binaries.starwars
Subject: Re: QuickTime 4 Trailer
flotze wrote:
> Where can I find a downloadable QT4 trailer? I swore that countingdown
> had it about a week ago, and now I can't find it anywhere.
> Thanx.
> Robert
Try Apple.com in the Quicktime 4 section.

11 If there is a '+' sign by the message header this means there are replies to this message which you can also read. Click on the '+' sign to list the replies.

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Online chat

Talking to other people over the Net is as easy as picking up a phone. We explore the wheres and whys of online chat

What is online chat?

Online chat lets you communicate with others – often in real time. In other words, you type in comments, send them over the Net and they're seen almost immediately. And you're only paying for a local phone call – even if the person you are 'talking' to happens to be on the other side of the world.

What does it let me do?

- 'Chat' with friends and relatives in other countries without running up massive phone bills.
- Join in an online discussion with an expert on your favourite subject.
- Ask a celebrity questions during a moderated 'conference'.
- Talk randomly to people on the other side of the world.

DON'T PULL THAT FACE ROUND HERE

'Smileys' are a way of including some indication of emotion in your messages. They are useful when, for example, you are making a joke and you want to be sure that the person at the other end of the line realises you're not serious. Hang a relevant smiley on the end of your sentence by typing in the relevant characters – but do try not to over-use these things. To 'read' them, just turn the page 90 degrees to the left ;-) OK? Here are the four most used smileys:

- :-) The original smiley. Indicates a joke, or just a happy person!
- ;-) Wink
- :-o Shock (an open mouth)
- :-(Unhappy

BEGINNER'S TIP

Don't register your details unless you really want to

Often chat software will ask you for your name, and sometimes other info. Be wary about giving this; you don't know what they'll be used for.

INTERMEDIATE TIP

Be careful out there

If you are looking for romance online, be careful. As you would with press ads, let someone know where you're going if you meet up.

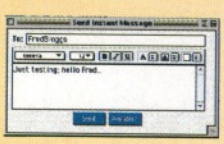
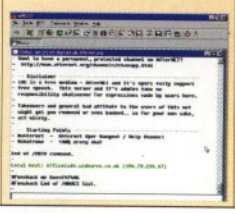
ADVANCED TIP

Go one step further

If text chat seems a bit flat, try 3D chat, where users take on a 'persona' and actually walk round chat rooms. Try ***www.thepalace.com*** for starters.

What kinds of Internet chat can I try?

There are several programs and methods for chatting online. It can get a bit confusing, so let's look at the main options

TYPE OF CHAT		FOR & AGAINST	CHAT LINK
LIVE ON A WEB SITE This kind of chat takes place within the window of your browser on a Web site. Everything you type in can immediately be seen by the other people viewing the Web page – and everything anyone else types in can be seen by you.		**FOR** Easy to use; no extra software required to run it. **AGAINST** Works on someone's Web site, so the subject will be dictated by them and private chat is unlikely.	***chat.www.talkcity.com*** Online community where you can talk on various subjects, including romance and current affairs.
MODERATED SESSIONS Moderated chats are 'supervised' by a chat room host. In other words, you type in your message and a person sitting at the other end of the line decides whether or not to allow your comments or questions to be displayed. This is the norm for celebrity chats.		**FOR** Discussions are sensibly run. Plonkers may be screened out. **AGAINST** Only take place at certain times because they require a moderator to be present on the site. Censorship...	***chat.beeb.com*** The BBC's celebrity chat service with daily visits from the network's top stars.
REAL-TIME USING EXTRA SOFTWARE Software such as AOL's Instant Messenger and ICQ allow you to chat with other people in real time – either a group of people together, or one-on-one. You don't use a Web browser; dedicated software takes care of everything for you.		**FOR** Instant response; you can chat privately to one person. **AGAINST** Requires extra software; some firms don't allow this to be installed on their PCs, so you may not be able to chat at work.	***www.aol.co.uk/aim*** ***www.icq.com*** Chat one-to-one with your friends in real time on the Net. AOL's Instant Messenger and ICQ software are two of the most popular.
IRC This is Internet Relay Chat. It's a way of talking to many people at once using special software. IRC software can be a pain to use, however – it was, after all, modelled on Citizens' Band radio.		**FOR** Useful, technical chats are often held on IRC channels. **AGAINST** Software is difficult to use; IRC users can be impatient with newcomers.	***www.mirc.com*** Although it can be tricky to get used to, mIRC is the best software for IRC chat.

CHAT ROOMS

There are thousands of Web sites devoted to Internet chat. Here's a small selection of destinations

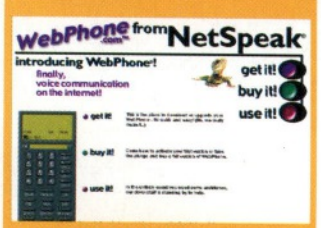
www.yack.com
List of live Internet events and celeb chats. A great starting point

chat.ncbuy.com
Chat rooms on all sorts of subjects. Join by signing up to a free account

www.iwannatalk.com
More chat rooms – from sports to romance, you'll find it here

www.aol.co.uk
AOL's famous for its chat. Sign up for an account on the home page

www.icq.com
ICQ is an 'instantaneous chat' program that tells you when your friends are online



www.webphone.com
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Cyber Police

Can filtering software stop your children stumbling across or deliberately finding the unsavoury side of the Internet?

Admit it, we've all snuck a look at a few grubby Web sites in our time. Anyone who's spent any amount of time surfing the Net knows that there are stacks and stacks of dubious, dodgy and often quite disgusting sites out there.

There's copious amounts of porn, 'hate' sites that spew racial or sexual prejudice of one sort or another, sites dealing with drugs, and sites on devil worship and other such anti-social pastimes.

In that sense, the Internet is no different from any other medium – it simply reflects the diverse interests of the people who use it. But what does make the Internet different is that it's extremely easy to stumble across such material by accident. Anyone who's ever used a search engine knows how easy it is to come across links to porn sites, even if you're looking for something completely unrelated. Type something as innocuous as 'stamp collecting' into a search engine and the next thing you know you're staring at a link to Madame Sin's House of Nookie.

All this might be highly amusing if you're a grown adult and

Carry on nanny – but some things in life simply defy censorship

therefore able to take good care of yourself. But if you have children the last thing you want is for them to be exposed to such material. And it's not just Web sites – chat-rooms, email and newsgroups are sometimes invaded by people placing ads for porn sites, as well as outright sickos who simply want to talk dirty in public.

Any responsible parent obviously wants to guard against such dangers. Let's be clear here. If you want to completely protect your kids from Internet sex and violence, then there's no replacement for actually sitting there and watching them while they surf. But in the real world, we all know that from time to time the phone, the baby or the

television will divert your attention away from the children just long enough for them to stumble across something they shouldn't. To help you out in those unguarded moments, there's a whole range of software products that come under the general description of 'Net nannies' or (should you prefer the technical term) 'content filtering software'. Such programs sit quietly and contentedly in the background until your children try and access

Lines of Defence

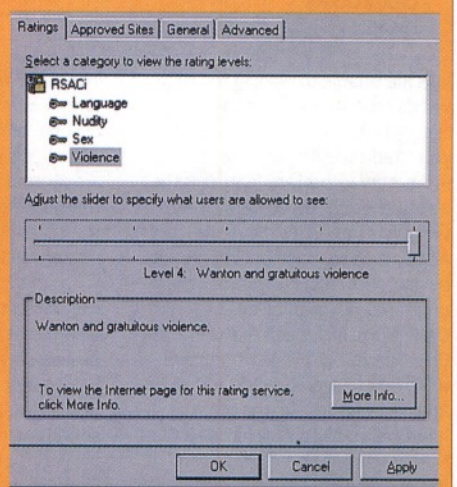
Buying a Net nanny program isn't the only way to protect your kids on-line. It isn't common knowledge, but there are ratings systems for the Internet just like those used for films. The main ones are SafeSurf, PICS (Platform for Internet Content Selection) and RSACI (Recreational Software Advisory Council on the Internet).

Netscape's Navigator browser has all three rating systems built-in (you can access them through 'Help', then 'Netwatch'), while Microsoft's Internet Explorer includes PICS and RSACI (access these through the 'Preferences' menu and then 'Ratings').

While the programs are well-meaning, they are still voluntary, which means they only work if Web sites actually agree to include information on their pages that the browsers can use to decide whether or not to permit access. Any site can bypass these systems by simply not including this information – which defeats the purpose of the exercise somewhat. That's why other companies have developed the more powerful Internet nanny programs that are featured here in this article.

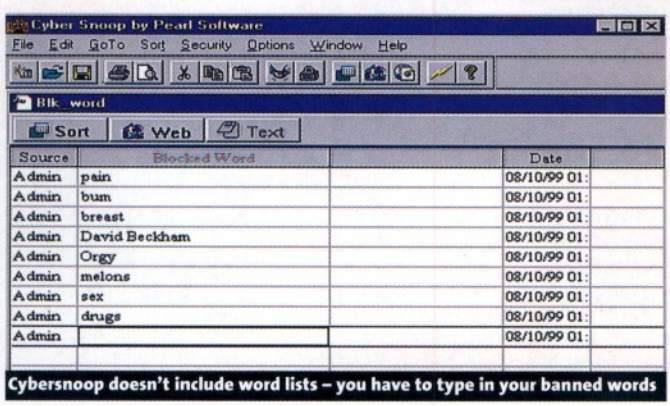
Fear not, though, there are other things that you can do to protect your little darlings. Perhaps the quickest and easiest solution is to get an account with an ISP (for example AOL) that provides its own parental controls. AOL dedicates lots of its own content specifically to younger users. This content is walled off from the rest of the Internet, and AOL's parental controls allow parents to restrict their children to just these areas.

AOL also employs special supervisors to monitor areas such as its children's chat-rooms, which gives more reassurance.



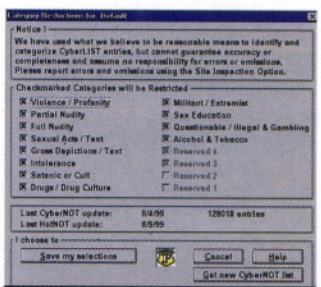
The Internet Explorer (above) and Navigator browsers both include the RSACI ratings

Net Nanny includes extensive lists of banned Web sites and words



Cybersnoop doesn't include word lists – you have to type in your banned words

Net nannies come with built-in lists of unsuitable Web sites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CyberPatrol – the parent can choose which categories to allow or disallow

any Web sites, newsgroups or chat-room messages that contain inappropriate material. They're not perfect by any stretch of the imagination, but the better ones can filter out a good deal of the stuff you wouldn't want your kids to see.

What's available?

There are more than a dozen Net nanny programs available, although the most well-known ones are probably CyberPatrol, Net Nanny, Cyber Snoop and SurfWatch. All these programs work in much the same way; the primary difference between them being how flexible they are when allowing you to modify their basic settings.

The first line of defence that these programs offer is that they all come supplied with built-in lists of 'unsuitable' sites. These lists are compiled by the companies that develop the programs and any attempt to enter one of these sites is automatically blocked. Obviously, ▶

A smarter nanny?

Ad Filter was developed by British company ARM Direct to save download time by blocking the adverts that festoon many Web sites. However, ARM realised that they could use the same artificial techniques to block pornographic material, so developed an add-on module called AdultFilter. ARM claims that its program is 99.97 per cent effective in blocking ads and porn, We were unable to obtain a full review copy to test but more information is available from the Web site at ***www.adfilter.com***

different people have different ideas about what constitutes 'unsuitable', so programs generally break their lists down into several categories: for example sex, violence, profanity and drugs. The advantage of this approach is that you can choose which categories you want to allow or disallow your sprogs to see. These lists are regularly updated by the software developers, and if you pay for the full version of the program – rather than just using free trial versions that are available – you can download the latest updates from the Internet every week or so.

Unfortunately, the Net is growing so fast that updated lists can't keep track of every single site that contains dodgy material. So the next line of defence is to provide lists of banned words that tell the nanny program to block any site containing them. Most of these programs will also allow you to edit lists by adding words of your own or by over-riding the list to allow words that were originally banned. The problem here, though, is that you can spend hours thinking of new words that cover all eventualities. Just think how many slang words there are for breasts and you'll see what we mean.

Cyberpatrol seemed to offer best all-round protection

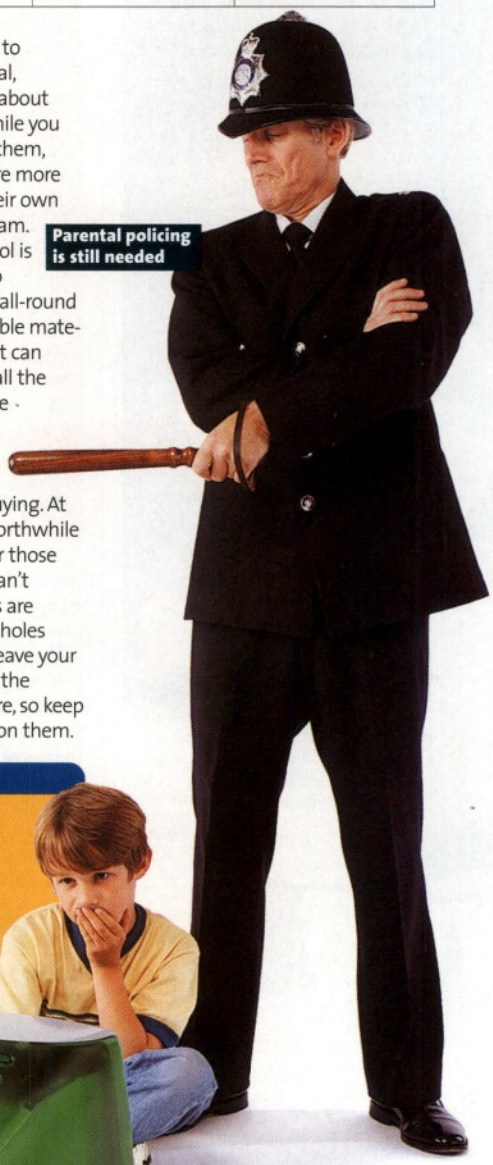
Some programs, such as SurfWatch and Cyber Snoop, also tend to be a little inflexible here. Cyber Snoop doesn't include any built-in word lists so you have to type them all in for yourself, while SurfWatch hides its word list so that kids are unable to read all the rude words on it. An excellent idea in theory, but it also makes it hard for you to edit the list yourself.

Another important feature is the ability of programs to apply these word lists not only to Web sites, but also to messages in chat-rooms and newsgroups. This is one area where programs vary significantly. Cyberpatrol includes a feature called ChatGuard that allows you to use word lists to monitor chat-rooms and newsgroups. On the other hand, neither SurfWatch nor Net Nanny seemed to monitor newsgroup messages very effectively.

Even these word lists aren't infallible. It is possible to confuse programs by printing words with combinations of upper and lower-case letters. A word list might block the words 'sex', but a site containing 'SeX' in mixed upper and lower-case letters might slip through the net. And, of course, a site that contains truckloads of dirty pictures and very little text can easily slip through.

The other important thing to remember is that, in general, children often know more about computers than adults. While you are attempting to protect them, many of the little angels are more than capable of finding their own way around a nanny program.

On the whole, CyberPatrol is the program that seems to provide the most effective all-round protection against unsuitable material; developers claim that it can block some 90 percent of all the smut it comes across. These programs only cost £30-£40, and many of them offer free trial versions that you can test before buying. At these prices they offer a worthwhile extra layer of protection for those odd moments when you can't watch everything your kids are doing. But remember: loopholes mean that you can never leave your children's safety entirely in the hands of a piece of software, so keep more than a watchful eye on them.



Parental policing is still needed

How the big four Net nannies compare

	CYBERPATROL	CYBERSNOOP	NET NANNY	SURFWATCH
PRICE	£39.99	£29	£29	£29
TRIAL VERSION AVAILABLE	Y	Y	Y	Y
- AVAILABLE FROM	*www.cyberpatrol.co.uk*	*www.pearlsw.com*	*www.netnanny.co.uk*	*www.surfwatch.com*
UK CONTACT	01293-651300	01488-681743	0171-493-5133	0118-979-4422
RUNS ON	Windows/Mac	Windows	Windows	Windows/Mac
RATING SYSTEMS:				
- RSACI	Y	Y	N	N
- PICS	Y	Y	N	N
- SAFESURF	Y	Y	N	N
INCLUDES LISTS OF BANNED SITES	Y	Y	Y	Y
LISTS OF BANNED WORDS	Y	N	Y	Y
LISTS CAN BE EDITED BY USER	Y	Y	Y	Y
DETECTS BANNED WORDS IN:				
- NEWSGROUPS	Y	Y	N	N
- CHATROOMS	Y	Y	Y	N
- EMAIL	N	N	N	N

How effective is filtering software in the hands of the kids?

16 year-old versus nanny

To see just how well some of the current Net nanny software works, we asked 16 year-old Alex Feldman to test two of the packages: Cyberpatrol and Net Nanny. Alex takes his GCSEs next year and, while he is an avid gamer, his general computing ability is average, he says. We would like to point out that Alex was supervised at all times during the testing. We tested two of the packages mentioned here: Cyber Patrol and Net Nanny, attempting to go to Web sites directly, search under risky words and enter chat rooms.

Cyber Patrol came out the better of the two. It would let us into the FHM site and look at scantily-clad cover girls but it prevented us from entering Loaded. It also managed to differentiate from BareNaked Ladies, the band, and the other type. We carried out a number of searches (under cannabis, drugs, alcohol, beer, cigarettes and fruit machine), and didn't get anywhere. Similarly, it instantly blocked us from the three major porn sites we tried but it did let us go into adult chat rooms to post messages.

Overall, Net Nanny proved less effective. We got through to two out of the three major porn sites we tried, and it let us see sites on Hitler, Kosova and Northern Ireland. We were also able to get into a site about growing marijuana.

Both packages gave Alex a degree of protection from certain areas of the Net but we continue to stress that there is no substitute for parental supervision.

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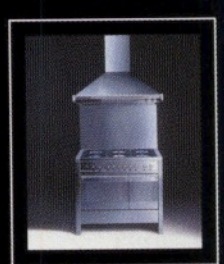

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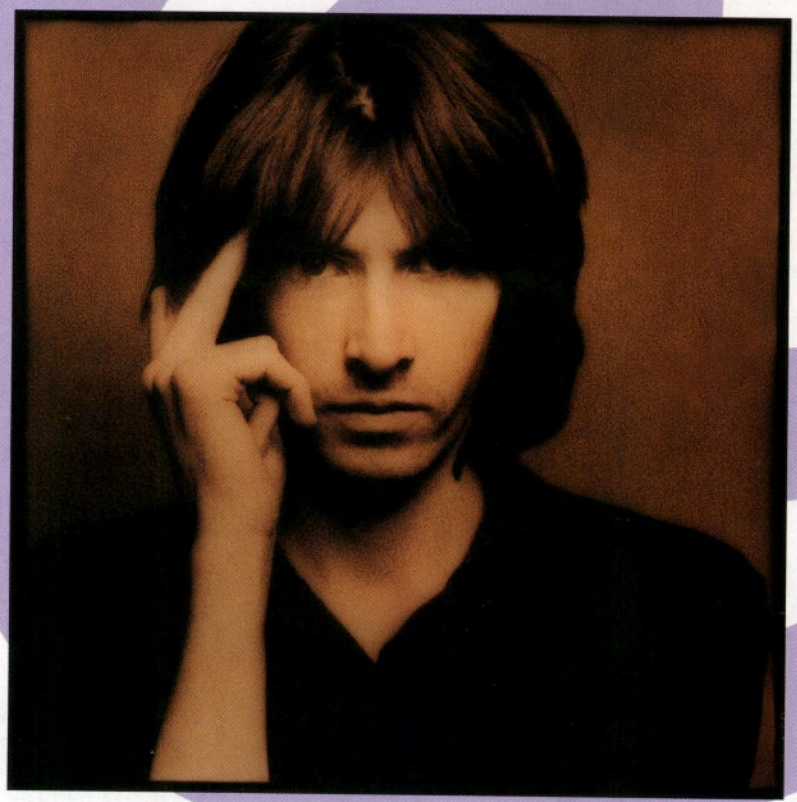
BERNARD BUTLER

The former Suede guitarist turned solo crooner on his Net obsessions and the fan behind his own site



Your current single is only available on your Web site. Why did you decide to do that?
If you get down to the pure essence of what a musician wants, the Internet is a great medium for delivering it. Basically, there are no editors. People can put across anything they want without the middle man, without waiting for the media to decide if they like it or not. It also means that people have to really want to hear your music, because they need to get off their arse to find out about it.

Not releasing an actual CD cost you a chart placing, though...
I don't care about that; it takes away the pressure. It's embarrassing when something goes in at number 55. A lot of great records don't sell anything at all, which is quite frustrating.

How long have you been online?
About three or four years now. I use it primarily for email. I don't have a manager at the moment, so that's how I keep in contact with the record company.

How involved are you with your own site?
At first it was just a fan doing it; he lives in Japan. I saw the site and I was quite frightened by how much he knew about my life, so we decided to make it official. Now I email him the information and he puts it up on to the site. I met him for the first time just recently.

Would you consider putting a Public Enemy-style MP3 on the site?
Legally, we can't do it. Someone like Prince can afford the legal fees, which is great – it's just a shame the major record companies haven't got involved with it. People talk about there being no more CDs and no more record stores, but that's rubbish. They said that when CDs came out but loads of people still have vinyl.

I've seen my stuff on MP3 sites; it doesn't bother me at all. It's like the bootleg tapes you had when you were a kid. I learned a lot more about playing guitar from listening to bootlegs than listening to actual records.

What can we expect from the new album?
It's shorter and a bit more in-your-face. The last record was almost deliberately naïve, because that's the way I felt at the time. I wanted a record with a different direction.

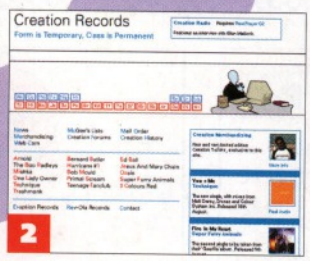
How does being a solo artist compare with being part of a group?
I enjoyed being in a group, but this is what I really wanted to do. You get to explore so many different areas of music. I'm already thinking about the next couple of albums, but beyond that, who knows?

Friends and Lovers is available from the Bernard Butler site (www.bernardbutler.com). An album of the same name is released on Creation in October.

BERNARD'S BEST OF THE WEB

1 BABYCENTER *www.babycenter.com*

'When my wife was pregnant we wanted to find out exactly what was happening week-by-week. This site's great if you're paranoid.'



2 CREATION RECORDS *www.creation.co.uk*

'This is better than most record company sites, although it could still be updated more.'

3 ROOM SERVICE *www.roomservice.co.uk*

'It's very impressive, but they phone you to confirm your order. It makes you think: "What's the point?"'

4 SKY NEWS *www.skynews.co.uk/skynews/*

'Just so I can keep informed.'

5 BERNARD BUTLER *www.bernardbutler.com*

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